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THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS
OF
SANTILLANE.

A NEW TRANSLATION,

By the Author of RODERICK RANDOM.

Adorned with Thirty-three CUTS, neatly engraved.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

THE THIRD EDITION.

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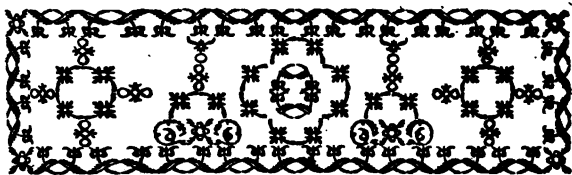
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THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS. of Santillane.
BOOK IV.



CHAP. I.

Gil Blas being disgusted at the irregularities of the actresses, quits the service of Arsenia, and gets into a more creditable family.

REMNANT of honour and religion, which I did not fail to preserve amidst such corruption of morals, made me resolve not only to leave Arsenia, but also to break off all correspondence with Laura, whom, however, I could not help loving, though

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though I was sensible of her flagrant infidelity. Happy is he who can thus profit by those moments of reflection that interrupt the pleasures which engross his attention! Early one morning, I bundled up my cloaths, and without clearing with Arsenia, who was, indeed, little or nothing in my debt; or taking leave of my dear Laura, I quitted the house where I had breathed nothing but the air of debauchery; and I had no sooner performed such a good action than heaven rewarded me for it, by throwing me in the way of the steward of Don Matthias my late master. Having saluted him, he knew me, and stopt to enquire if I was in any service; to which I answered, that I had been about a minute or two out of place: for that, after having lived about a month with Arsenia, whose behaviour I did not like, I had left her of my own accord, in order to preserve my innocence. The steward, as if he had been scrupulously religious, approved of my delicacy, and told me that since I was a young man of such honour, he would make it his business to settle me in an advantageous place. He performed his promise, and that very day introduced me into the service of Don Vincent de Guzman, whose manager was one of his acquaintance.

I could not have got into a better family, and therefore had no cause to be displeased with my situation in the sequel. Don Vincent was a very rich old nobleman, who had lived many years without law-suit or wife; the phy-

physicians having deprived him of his spouse, by endeavouring to free her of a cough, which she might have preserved much longer had she abstained from their prescriptions. Instead of marrying again, he had applied himself wholly to the education of Aurora, his only daughter, who was then going in her six and twentieth year, and justly passed for an accomplished young lady : for with an uncommon share of beauty, she had an excellent genius, perfectly well cultivated. Her father, though he was no conjurer, possessed the happy talent of managing his affairs to the best advantage ; but had one fault, which, however, is pardonable in old men. He delighted in talking, and above all things, of war and bloodshed. If any body was so unfortunate as to touch that string in his presence, he instantly set the trumpet to his mouth ; and the hearers were very happy if they got off for the relation of two sieges and three battles. As he had spent two-thirds of his life in the army, his memory was an inexhaustible source of different actions, which were not always listened to with the same pleasure that he felt in recounting them. Besides, he stammered in his speech, and was very prolix, which rendered his manner of relating very disagreeable. Otherwise, I never knew a nobleman of a better character. He had a great deal of æquanimity, and was neither passionate nor whimsical : a circumstance which I admired very much in a man of quality. Though he

was a good œconomist, he kept an honourable house, his domesticks consisting of several footmen, and three women who waited on Aurora. I soon perceived that the steward of Don Matthias had procured a good post for me, and bent all my endeavours to maintain myself in it: for this purpose, I began by reconnoitring the ground; that is, studying the different humours of every body in the family; then, regulating my conduct by the observations I made, it was not long before I acquired the good will of my master, and all his servants.

When I had been about a month in Don Vincent's family, I thought I perceived that his daughter distinguished me from all the rest of the valets in the house. Always when her eyes were fixed upon me, I remarked a sort of complaisance in her countenance, which I could not observe when she looked at my fellows. Had I not lived among beaux and players, it would never have come into my head to imagine that Aurora could think of me; but I was a good deal spoiled among these gentlemen, who are seldom extremely delicate in their sentiments of the most virtuous ladies. "If (said I to myself) we may believe those stage-players, they are sometimes benefited by the whims to which women of quality are subject. And how do I know that my mistress is free from such caprice?—No! (added I) I cannot believe it. She is not one of those Messalinas, who belying the

pride of their birth, humble their affections so unworthily, even to the dust, and dishonour themselves without blushing. But rather, one of those virtuous, though tender, young ladies, who, satisfied with the bounds prescribed by honour to their inclinations, make no scruple of inspiring as well as of entertaining a delicate passion, which yields amusement without danger."

These were my sentiments of my mistress, tho' I did not know precisely how to interpret her behaviour. In the mean time, as often as she saw me, she did not fail to smile and express joy in her countenance; so that without passing for a fool, any man might have been insnared by such fair appearances: I therefore could resist them no longer; but concluded, that Aurora was strongly captivated with my merit; and looked upon myself as one of those happy domestics whose servitude is sweetened by love. That I might appear in some measure less unworthy of the favour which my good fortune had procured for me, I began to take more care of my person than I had ever done before: I spent all the money I had in linen, essences, and pomatums: the first thing I did of a morning was to dress and perfume myself, that I might not appear in dishabille before my mistress; and with this attention to my exteriors, and other airs I assumed, in order to please, I flattered myself that my happiness was not far off.

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Among Aurora's women there was one called Ortiz, an old gentlewoman who had lived more than twenty years in the family, and nursed Don Vincent's daughter, whom she still served in quality of a duenna, though she no longer performed the disagreeable part of that function; but, on the contrary, instead of discovering as formerly, the actions of Aurora, her sole business now was to conceal them. One evening, Dame Ortiz, having found an opportunity of speaking to me without being overheard, told me softly, that if I was wise and discreet, I would be in the garden at midnight, where I should be informed of things which I should not be sorry to hear. I answered, squeezing the duenna's hand, that I would not fail to be there; and we parted immediately, for fear of being surprized. Heavens! how did the time hang on my hands, from that instant to supper, (which in our family was always over in good time) and from thence to my master's going to bed! Every thing seemed to drag on with extraordinary slowness, and to crown my chagrin, when Don Vincent retired to his bed-chamber, instead of going to rest, he began to fight over again all his campaigns in Portugal, with which he had so often stunned me before. But one thing which he had never done hitherto, and reserved for this evening, was to tell me the names of all the officers who had distinguished themselves in his time, and even to recount their exploits. What did I suffer in

in hearing him to an end ! He left off speaking, however, at last, and got into bed. Upon which, I went into the little closet where I slept, from whence there was a passage, by a pair of back stairs, into the garden, and anointed my whole body with essence ; I then put on a clean shirt strongly perfumed, and having neglected nothing which I thought might flatter the passion of my mistress, went directly to the place of assignation.

Not finding Ortiz there, I concluded that, tired with waiting for me, she had returned to her apartment, and that the happy minute was past. I blamed Don Vincent for it, and as I was cursing his campaigns, heard it strike ten. This made me believe that the clock went wrong, for I was persuaded that it was at least an hour past midnight ; but I was so happily mistaken, that a good quarter of an hour after this, I heard another clock strike ten again. “ Very well, (said I to myself) I have but two whole hours to dance attendance, and they shall have no cause to complain of my punctuality. What must we do till twelve ? Let us take a turn in the garden, and consider the part I am to play, which is a pretty new one to me, who am but a novice in the whims of women of quality. I know well enough how to behave with Abigails and actresses ; these you accost with a familiar air, and come to the point without ceremony : but we must go another way to work with ladies of fashion : the gallant, I imagine, must be polite, com-

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plaisant, tender, and respectful, though not timorous : instead of endeavouring to hasten his own happiness, by the violence of his transports, he ought to lie in wait for the moment of frailty."

These were my reflections, and this the conduct I proposed to observe with Aurora ; representing to myself that in a little time, I should have the pleasure of seeing myself at her feet, and of saying a thousand passionate things to that amiable object. I even recollected all the passages of our theatrical pieces, which might be of service to me, and do me honour during our interview ; and by a seasonable application of these, I hoped, (after the example of some players whom I knew) to pass for a wit, though I could only boast of a memory. Absorpt in these reflections which amused my impatience more agreeably than the military stories of my master, I heard the clock strike eleven ; upon which, I plunged again into my reverie, sometimes walking, and sometimes sitting in an arbor at the farther end of the garden. The long expected hour of twelve at last struck, and in a few minutes, Ortiz, as punctual, though less impatient than I, appeared. " Signior Gil Blas, (said she, accosting me) how long have you been here ?" I replied, two hours. " In good sooth, (said she, laughing) you are very exact : It is a pleasure to make an assignation with you. True, indeed, (continued she, with a serious air) you cannot pay too dear for the happy tidings I have

have to tell you. My mistress wants to have some private conversation with you. I will say no more. The rest is a secret you must learn from her own mouth. Follow me, and I will conduct you into her apartment." So saying, the duenna took me by the hand, and led me, in a mysterious manner, through a little door, of which she had the key, into the chamber of her mistress.

C H A P. II.

The reception that Gil Blas met with from Aurora, and the conversation that passed between them.

I saluted Aurora, whom I found in dishabille, in the most respectful manner, and with the best grace I could put on; and she received me with a smiling air, forced me to sit down by her, and bad her ambassadress retire into another room. After this prelude, with which I was not ill pleased, she addressed herself to me in these words. "Gil Blas, you must have perceived that I look upon you in a favourable light, and distinguish you from the rest of my father's servants; and even though you may not have observed, by my looks, that I have a regard for you, the step I have taken this night, will leave you no room to doubt it."

I gave her no time to proceed, but believing that I ought, as a polite gentleman, to spare her modesty the pain of a more formal explanation, I started up in a transport, and throwing

throwing myself at her feet, like a stage hero, who falls on his knees before his princess, cried in a theatrical tone, "Ah, madam! can it be possible that Gil Blas, hitherto the foot-ball of fortune, and outcast of nature, is so happy as to have inspired you with sentiments—" "Don't speak so loud, (said my mistress, laughing) you will awaken my women, who are asleep in the next room. Get up, take your seat again, and hear me to an end, without interrupting me. Yes, Gil Blas (continued she, resuming her gravity) I am your well-wisher; and as a proof of my esteem, will impart to you a secret, on which the repose of my life depends: I am in love with a young gentleman of beauty, fortune, and illustrious birth: his name is Don Lewis Pacheco; and although I have seen him several times in the Prado, and at public shews, I have never spoke to him, am even ignorant of his character, and don't know but he may be a person of bad morals. This is what I want to be informed of; and having occasion for a man to inquire carefully about his reputation, and bring me a faithful account of it, I make choice of you, and believe I run no risk, by intrusting you with this commission, in which, I hope, you will acquit your self with so much discretion and address, that I shall never repent of having made you my confident."

Here my mistress left off speaking, in order to know what answer I would make; and I, though at first disconcerted at being so dis-

GIL BLAS.

agreeably undeceived, quickly recollected self, and surmounting the shame, which is ways the concomitant of unsuccessful rashness expressed so much zeal for the lady's interest and devoted myself with so much ardour to her service, that, though she might still continue to think that I had foolishly flattered myself with having made an impression on her heart, she saw very well that I knew how to make amends for my folly. I asked but a few days to bring her an account of Don Lewis; after which, Dame Ortiz being called in by her mistress, conducted me back into the garden, and left me there, after having said, "Good night, Gil Blas, I know your punctuality so well, that I need not recommend it to you to be early at the next assignation."

I returned to my chamber, not without some vexation to find my expectations baffled: nevertheless, I was wise enough to reflect that it became me better to be the confidant than the lover of my mistress. I considered too, that this might turn out to my advantage, as the messengers of love are, usually well paid for their trouble; and I went to bed in a full resolution to perform what I had desired. With this view, I went abroad the next day, and found no difficulty in learning the place of abode of such a noted cavalier as Don Lewis. I enquired into his character in my neighbourhood; but those to whom I applied could not fully satisfy my curiosity. This made me repeat my enquiries the following

day, when I was more successful. Meeting by accident, in the street, a young man of my acquaintance, we stopt to chat a little, and, that very instant, a friend of his happening to pass, made up to us, and told his comrade, that he had been just turned away by Don Pacheco, the father of Don Lewis, on suspicion of having drank a cask of wine belonging to his master. I did not lose such a fair opportunity of being informed of every thing I wanted to know, and succeeded so well by the questions I asked, that I went home very well satisfied that I was able to keep my word with my mistress. I was to see her again the next night, at the same hour, and in the same manner as at first; but I did not suffer so much disquiet that night, and far from bearing the conversation of my old master with impatience, I introduced the subject of his campaigns, waited for twelve with the utmost tranquility, ~~and~~ it was not until I had heard the hour repeated by several clocks, that I went down into the garden, void of essence and perfumes, resolved, for the future, to retrench that extravagance.

I found the most trusty duenna at the rendezvous, and she upbraided me in a satirical manner, for having abated in my diligence. I made no answer, but let her conduct me into the apartment of Aurora, who as soon as I appeared, asked if I had got good intelligence of Don Lewis. "Yes, Madam, (said I) and you shall hear it in two words. In the

first place I must tell you, that he will set out very soon, on his return to Salamanca, in order to finish his studies. He is a young cavalier of honour and probity, and, being a gentleman and Castilian, his courage is not to be doubted; he has, besides, a great deal of wit, and his behaviour is very agreeable: but that which, perhaps, you will least like in him, is a disposition, too much a-kin to that of most of our young noblemen, extremely rakish. You must know that, young as he is, he has already had two actresses in keeping." "Is it possible! (cried Aurora) heavens! what morals! but are you certain, Gil Blas, that he leads such a licentious life?" "Oh! I don't at all doubt it, madam, (I replied) I was informed by a valet, who was turned out of his service this morning: and servants are commonly very sincere, when they talk of their master's faults: besides, he keeps company with Don Alexo Segiar, Don Antonio Centelles, and Don Fernand de Gamboa; and that, alone, is a sufficient demonstration of his libertinism." "Enough, Gil Blas, (said my mistress, sighing) on the credit of your report, I will combat my unworthy passion, which, though it has already taken deep root in my heart, I don't despair to overcome. Go, (added she, giving me a little purse well replenished) there's something for your trouble; beware of disclosing my secret, and remember that I depend upon your silence."

I assured

I assured my mistress, that she might make herself perfectly easy on that score, for I was the * Harpocrates of trusty valets. After this assurance, I withdrew, very impatient to know the contents of the purse, in which I found twenty pistoles. This made me believe, that Aurora would have certainly given me more, had I brought her agreeable tidings, since she paid me so handsomely for such a mortifying piece of news : and I repented that I had not imitated the lawyers, who sometimes put a gloss upon the truth, in the practice of their profession ; I was sorry for having nipt in the bud an intrigue, the consequence of which might have been very advantageous to me : however, I had the consolation to see myself indemnified for my unseasonable expence in essences and perfumes,

C H A P. III.

The great change that happened in the family of Don Vincent, and the strange resolution with which love inspired the fair Aurora.

SOON after this adventure, Signior Don Vincent happened to fall sick; and though he had not been in such an advanced age, the symptoms of his disease were so violent, that we had reason to fear a fatal issue. When he was first seized, two of the most famous physicians of Madrid were sent for. One of them

was

* Harpocrates, among the ancients, was worshipped as the god of silence.

was called doctor Andros, and the other doctor Oquetos, who having examined the patient with great attention, were of opinion, that the humours of his body were in a state of fermentation: but in nothing else could they agree. "We must make haste, (said Andros) and purge off the humours, though they be crude, while they continue in this violent agitation of flux and reflux, lest they settle upon some noble part." Oquetos, on the contrary, maintained, that they ought to wait for the concoction of the humours, before they should employ a cathartic. "But your method (resumed the first) is directly opposite to that of the prince of medicine: Hippocrates orders cathartics in the very first days of the most ardent fever, and says, in express terms, that we must be ready to purge, when the humours are in the orgasm; that is to say, in a state of fermentation." "O! there you are mistaken, (replied Oquetos) Hippocrates, by the word orgasm, does not understand the fermentation, but the concoction of the humours."

Upon this, the doctors grew passionate: one repeated the Greek text, and quoted all those authors who had explained it in his way: the other, relying on a Latin translation, pronounced it in a tone still more vociferous. Which of them was in the right? Don Vincent was not the man to decide that question; but seeing himself obliged to chuse, bestowed his confidence on him who had dis-

patched the greatest number of patients; I mean the eldest of the two. Andros, therefore, who was the younger, withdrew, not without darting some strokes of raillery at his senior, on his interpretation of the word orgasm. Oquetos, who remained triumphant, being a man of doctor Sangrado's principle, began, by ordering his patient to be copiously blooded, deferring his cathartic until the humours should be concocted; but death, who, without doubt, was afraid the purgation so sagely delayed, would deprive him of his prey, prevented the concoction, and carried my master off. Such was the end of Signior Don Vincent, who lost his life, because his physician did not understand Greek!

Aurora having celebrated her father's funerals, in a manner suitable to his birth, took possession of his estate, and, being now mistress of herself, dismissed some of the domestics, with rewards proportioned to their several services, and, in a little time, retired to a castle, which she had on the banks of the Tagus, between Sacedon and Buendia. I was not only one of those whom she retained, and carried to the country with her, but also had the good fortune to become a necessary person. Notwithstanding the faithful report I had made to her of Don Lewis, she was still in love with that cavalier; or rather, finding herself unable to conquer her passion, she had abandoned herself intirely to it; and being no longer under a necessity of taking precautions

to speak with me in private, “ Gil Blas, (said she sighing) I cannot forget Don Lewis; in spite of all my efforts to banish him from my thoughts, he is still present in my imagination; not such as thou hast painted him, plunged in all sorts of debauchery; but such as I would have him to be, tender, amorous, and constant.” So saying, she began to melt, and could not help shedding some tears; which affected me so much, that I could scarce refrain from weeping also; and I could not make my court to her more effectually, than by sympathizing with her sorrow. “ I see thou hast a very tender disposition, my friend, (added she, after having dried her fair eyes) and I am so well satisfied with thy zeal, that thou may’st depend upon being well recompensed. Dear Gil Blas, I have more occasion now than ever for thy assistance. I will disclose to thee a design, which at present engrosses me, and which thou wilt (no doubt) pronounce very capricious. Know, that I intend to set out immediately for Salamanca, where I will disguise myself like a cavalier, and, under the name of Don Felix, get acquainted with Pacheco, whose confidence and friendship I will endeavour to acquire: I will often speak to him of Aurora de Guzman, and call herself my cousin; by which means, he will, perhaps, express a desire to see her; and then my expectation will be answered. We will have two different lodgings at Salamanca, in one of which I will pass for Don Felix,

Felix, in the other for Aurora, and presenting myself to the eyes of Don Lewis, sometimes metamorphosed into a man, and sometimes in my own dress; I flatter myself, that I shall by degrees, accomplish my purpose. I grant, (added she) that this is an extravagant scheme; but I am hurried away by my passion, and the innocence of my intention makes me insensible of the risk I must run."

I was very much of Aurora's opinion, with regard to the nature of her design: nevertheless, how imprudent soever I judged it, I took care not to act the pedagogue; but, on the contrary, began to gild the pill, and undertook to prove, that this mad project was no more than an agreeable frolic, that could have no bad consequence. My mistress was pleased with this construction; for lovers are charmed with flattery, even in their most extravagant fancies. We now, therefore, looked upon this rash enterprize in no other light than that of a comedy, the skilful representation of which it was our business to concert. Having chosen our actors from the servants of the family; the parts were distributed, without the least quarrel or disturbance; because we were not players by profession. It was resolved that Dame Ortiz should act the part of Aurora's aunt, under the name of Donna Ximena de Guzman, attended by a valet and waiting-woman; and that Aurora, dressed like a cavalier, should entertain me as valet de chambre, together with one of her

own maids, in the disguise of a page, to be always about her person. The characters being thus regulated, we returned to Madrid, where we understood Don Lewis still was, but that it would not be long before he would set out for Salamanca; upon which we ordered the necessary dresses to be made with all diligence; and when they were finished, my mistress caused them to be conveniently packed up, until we should find a proper time and place for putting them on. Then leaving the care of her house to the steward, she set out in a coach drawn by four mules, and took the road to the kingdom of Leon, with all those of her servants who had parts to act in her performance.

We had already crossed Old Castile, when the axle-tree of the coach gave way, between Avila and Villafior, about three or four hundred paces from a castle, which we perceived at the foot of a mountain. As night approached, we were not a little embarrassed, when a peasant, passing by accident, rid us of our anxiety, by telling us, that the castle which we saw, belonged to Donna Elvira, widow of Don Pedro de Pinares, a lady whose character he extolled so much, that my mistress sent me to the castle, to beg a lodging for one night. Elvira did not belye the countryman's report, but received me with great affability, and favoured Aurora's compliment with such an answer as she desired. We repaired immediately to the castle, whither our coach

coach was dragged slowly by the mules, and at the gate met Don Pedro's widow, who came out to receive my mistress. I will pass over in silence the civil things that were said, on both sides, on this occasion, and only observe, that Elvira was a lady pretty much advanced in years, but very polite, and understood how to perform the duties of hospitality as well as any woman in the world. She conducted Aurora into a sumptuous apartment, where leaving her to repose a few moments, she came and employed her attention on the most minute things that concerned us. Afterwards, when supper was ready, she ordered the cloth to be laid in Aurora's chamber, where they sat down together at table. Don Pedro's widow was not one of those people who cloud the honour of their entertainments with a pensive and discontented air: she was of a gay disposition, and supported the conversation in an agreeable manner; expressing herself with great dignity and elegance. I admired her understanding, and the delicate turn of her thoughts, which seemed to charm Aurora as well as me. They conceived a friendship for one another, and promised to maintain a correspondence by letters. Our coach could not be refitted till the following day, and as we should run some risk by setting out late, it was determined that we should stay at the castle another night. We, in our turn, were served with a profusion of victuals,
and

and our beds were no less comfortable than our meal.

Next day, my mistress found new charms in the conversation of Elvira, with whom she dined in a large hall, adorned with several pictures; one of which was remarkable for the beauty and wonderful expression of the figures, though it presented a very tragical scene to the view. A dead cavalier appeared lying on his back, and drowned in his own blood, but seemed still to retain a menacing air even in death. Near him lay a young lady in another attitude, stretched also upon the ground; a sword was seen plunged in her bosom, and she breathed her last sighs, fixing her dying eyes upon a young man, who seemed mortally grieved at the loss of her. The painter had likewise drawn another figure, which did not escape my attention: this was an old man of a good mien, who, strongly affected with the objects that struck his view, discovered as much sensibility as the youth. One would have thought that each of them felt the same pangs, at sight of these doleful images, but that each received the impression in a different manner. The old man seemed overwhelmed with the profound sorrow in which he was plunged: but there was fury mixed with the affliction of the youth. The painter had expressed the whole with such strength, that we could scarce withdraw our eyes from the performance. My mistress having asked what story the picture represented;

“Ma-

“Madam, (said Elvira) it is a faithful representation of the misfortunes of my family.” This answer excited the curiosity of Aurora, who expressed such an eager inclination to know more, that Don Pedro’s widow could not dispense with promising her the satisfaction she desired. This promise, which was made before Ortiz, her two companions and me, detained us all four in the hall after dinner. My mistress would have sent us away, but Elvira perceiving that we longed fervently to hear the explanation of the picture, had the goodness to bid us stay, saying that the story which she was going to relate, was none of those that required secrecy : and immediately began in these words.

* C H A·P. IV.

The baleful marriage. A Novel.

ROGER king of Sicily had a brother and a sister : the first, called Mainfroy, revolted against him, and lighted up a dangerous and bloody war in the kingdom ; but had the misfortune to lose two battles, and fall into the hands of the king, who contented himself with punishing his rebellion, by depriving him of his liberty. This clemency served only to make Roger pass for a barbarian, in the opinion of one part of his subjects, who said he had only saved his brother’s life, in order to exercise

* This novel is a true story, on which the late Mr. Thomson has founded his tragedy of Tancred and Sigismunda.

exercise upon him a slow and inhuman revenge. But all the rest, with more foundation, imputed the harsh treatment that Mainfroy suffered in prison, to his sister Mathilda alone: for she had, in effect, always hated the prince, and did not cease persecuting him as long as he lived: but she died soon after him, and her death was looked upon as a just punishment of her unnatural disposition.

Mainfroy having left two sons, as yet in their infancy, Roger wished to get rid of them, fearing that when they should arrive at a more advanced age, the desire of revenging their father would induce them to revive a faction which was not so much quelled, but that it might occasion new troubles in the state. He imparted his design to the senator Leontio Siffredi, his minister, who, to divert him from putting it in execution, undertook the education of prince Henriquez, the eldest, and advised him to commit the youngest, who was called Don Pedro, to the care of the constable of Sicily. Roger, persuaded that his nephews would be brought up by these men in that submission and duty which they owed to him, left the princes to their conduct, and took upon himself the care of his niece Constantia, who was of the same age with Henriquez, and only daughter of the princess Mathilda; he furnished her with women and masters, and spared nothing in her education.

Leontio Siffredi had a castle two short leagues from Palermo, at a place called Belmont:

mont : and there that minister employed himself in rendering Henriquez worthy of mounting one day the throne of Sicily. He soon observed in that prince, such amiable qualities, that he applied himself to the cultivation of them as closely as if he had had no children of his own. He was blessed, however, with two daughters ; the eldest of whom, called Blanch, younger by a year than the prince, was adorned with the most perfect beauty : the other named Porcia, whose birth occasioned her mother's death, was still in the cradle. Blanch, and prince Henriquez, as soon as they were capable of love, entertained a mutual passion ; though they had not the liberty of conversing in private. The prince, however, did not fail to find opportunities sometimes ; and knew so well how to profit by these precious moments, that he engaged the daughter of Sifredi to allow him to execute a project he had formed. Just about this time, it happened that Leontio was obliged, by the king's orders, to make a journey into one of the most remote provinces of the island : and during his absence, Henriquez caused an opening to be made in the wall of his apartment, that was contiguous to the chamber of Blanch ; supplying it with a sliding partition of wood, that opened and shut, without being perceived ; because it was so closely joined to the cieling, that the eye could not discover the artifice. A skilful architect, whom the prince had made his

his friend, performed the work with equal diligence and secrecy.

Through this passage, the amorous Henriquez introduced himself sometimes into the chamber of his mistress : but he did not abuse her favour : for though she was imprudent enough to allow him a private entrance into her apartment, she did not condescend so far, until he had assured her, that he would never ask any thing that innocence could not grant. One night, he found her very uneasy, because she had heard that Roger was very ill, and had sent for Siffredi, as high-chancellor of the kingdom, in order to intrust him with his last will. She represented to herself already, her dear Henriquez on the throne, and being afraid of losing him in that high station, was under the utmost anxiety ; and the tears stood in her eyes when he appeared. “ Heavens ! you weep, madam : what must I think of that sorrow with which I see you overwhelmed ? ” “ Sir, (replied Blanch) I cannot conceal my alarms : the king your uncle will soon cease to live, and you will succeed him. When I therefore foresee how far your new greatness will remove you from me, I own, I cannot be unconcerned. A monarch seldom beholds things with a lover’s eye, and that which was his utmost ambition while he was a subject, affects him but slightly when he is on the throne. Whether it be an unhappy presage, or reason only that inspires me, I feel my soul agitated with emotions that all my confidence in your

goodness cannot assuage; and though I dare not doubt your generosity, I cannot help distrusting my own destiny." "Adorable Blanch! (replied the prince) your fears are obliging, and justify my attachment to your charms; but the excess of your doubts injure my love, and (if I may be allowed to say so) the esteem which you owe me. No! think not that my destiny and yours can ever be separated. Believe rather, that you will always be the object of my happiness and joy. Lay aside your fear, therefore, and let it not disturb such endearing moments." "Ah, Sir! (answered the daughter of Leontio) as soon as you are crowned, your subjects, perhaps, will demand for your queen, a princess descended from a long race of kings, whose splendid nuptials may add new realms to yours; and perhaps, alas! you will answer their expectation, even at the expence of your inclination." "Ha! why, (replied Henriquez, with some warmth) why are you thus prone to torment yourself, by raising such an afflicting image of what will never happen. Should heaven dispose of the king, my uncle, and make me master of Sicily, I swear that I will espouse you in Palermo, in presence of all my court, and I invoke all that is sacred to confirm my oath."

Siffredi's daughter was cheered by the protestations of Henriquez, and the rest of their conversation turned on the king's distemper: on which occasion, Henriquez discovered the

goodness of his heart, in lamenting his uncle's fate, with which he had no great reason to be affected : the force of blood making him regret a prince, by whose death he should acquire a crown. Blanch, as yet, did not know all the misfortunes that threatened her. The constable of Sicily had met her coming out of her father's apartment, one day when he was at the castle of Belmont, on some important affairs, was captivated with her beauty, and next day, demanded her in marriage of Siffredi, who consented to the match ; but Roger's distemper intervening, the nuptials were deferred, and Blanch knew nothing of the matter.

One morning, just as Henriquez had done dressing, he was surprised to see Leontio, followed by Blanch, come into his apartment. " Sir, (said that minister to him) the news I bring are afflicting, but the consolation with which they are attended ought to moderate your grief. The king your uncle is dead, after having left you heir to his sceptre, and Sicily is subject to your sway. The grandees of the realm, who attend your orders at Palermo, have commissioned me to receive them from your mouth, and I am come, Sir, with my daughter, the first of your new subjects, to offer our early and sincere homage." The prince, who knew very well that Roger had laboured two months under a disease that gradually consumed him, was not much surprised at this piece of news ; nevertheless,

struck with the sudden change of his condition, he felt a thousand confused emotions rise within his breast; and having mused some time, broke silence, by addressing himself to Leontio in these words; "Sage Siffredi, I shall always look upon you as my father, glory in regulating my conduct by your counsel, and you shall be as much a king in Sicily as I am." So saying, he advanced to a table, on which there was a standish, and taking a sheet of paper, wrote his name at the bottom of the page. "What are you about to do, Sir?" (said Siffredi to him.) "I am going to manifest my gratitude and esteem, (answered Henriquez) presenting the sheet to Blanch, and saying, Receive, madam, this pledge of my faith, and of the empire over my inclinations which I now yield to you." Blanch took it, blushing, and made this answer to the prince; "I receive with respect the favours of my king; but I depend upon a father: and I hope your Majesty will not take it ill, that I deposite this paper in his hands, to be used as his prudence shall direct him."

She accordingly gave the subscription of Henriquez to her father, who then observed what, till that moment, had escaped his penetration. He discerned the prince's sentiments, and said to him, "Your Majesty shall have no cause to reproach me; for I will not abuse the confidence"—"My dear Leontio (cried Henriquez, interrupting him) don't imagine you can abuse it. Whatever use you shall make

of the paper, I will approve of your determination. But go, (added he) return to Palermo, order the preparations to be made for my coronation, and tell my subjects, that I will follow you immediately thither, in order to receive their oaths of allegiance, and assure them of my affection." The minister obeyed his new master's orders, and, with his daughter, set out for Palermo.

A few hours after their departure, the prince took the same road, more engrossed by his love, than by the high rank to which he was raised. As soon as he arrived in the city, he was saluted with innumerable shouts of joy, and amidst the acclamations of his people, entered the palace, where every thing was already prepared for the ceremony, and where he found the princess Constantia in deep mourning, and, to all appearance, very much affected with Roger's death. As they owed one another a mutual compliment of condolence on the event, they both acquitted themselves very handsomely; but it was more cold on the side of Henriquez, than on that of Constance; who, in spite of the enmity subsisting between their families, could not hate the prince. He placed himself on the throne, and the princess sat on his right hand, in an elbow chair not quite so high. The grandees of the kingdom took their places, each according to his rank: the ceremony began, and Leontio, as high-chancellor of the state, and keeper of the late king's will, opened and read

it with an audible voice. This deed contained in substance, that Roger, seeing himself without issue, named the eldest son of Mainfroy for his successor, on condition that he should espouse the princess Constance; which if he refused to perform, he should forfeit the crown of Sicily to the infant Don Pedro, his brother, who should enjoy it on the same terms.

Henriquez was confounded at these words; the restriction gave him incredible pain, which became still more violent, when Leontio, after having read the will, pronounced to the whole assembly, "My lords, having reported the last intentions of the late king to our new monarch, that generous prince consents to honour his cousin, the princess Constance, with his hand." At these words, Henriquez interrupted the chancellor, saying, "Leontio, remember the writing which Blanch"—"Sir (said Siffredi with precipitation, before the prince had time to explain himself) here it is. The grandees of the realm (added he, shewing the paper to the assembly) will here see by your majesty's august signature, the esteem you have for the princess, and the deference you pay to the last will of the deceased king, your uncle." Having spoke these words, he read the deed with which he himself had filled the paper, containing the most solemn engagement to marry Constance, conformable to the intention of Roger. The hall rung with repeated shouts of all present, who cried, "Long

live our magnanimous king Henriquez :” for, as no body was ignorant of the aversion which that prince had always manifested for the princess, it was feared, not without reason, that he would revolt against the condition of the will, and, by these means, raise commotions in the kingdom. But the reading of this paper intirely composed the minds of the nobles and people, and excited those general acclamations, which in secret tortured the monarch’s soul.

Constance, who, both on account of her own glory, and her passion for Henriquez, enjoyed the public satisfaction more than any body, chose this time to assure him of her gratitude. But the prince, in vain endeavouring to constrain himself, received her compliment with great affliction, and was, indeed, in such disorder, that he could not even perform what decency required. At last, yielding to the violence of his passion, he approached Siffredi, whom the duty of his office obliged to be pretty near his person, and, with a low voice, said, “ What have you done, Leontio ? The subscription, which I put into your daughter’s hands, was not intended for this use. You have betrayed”—“ Sir, (said Siffredi, interrupting him, in a resolute tone) consider your own glory ; if you refuse to follow the will of the king your uncle, you lose the crown of Sicily.” He had no sooner spoke in this manner, than he removed at a greater distance from the king, that he might not have an opportunity

portunity to reply. Henriquez remained in the utmost perplexity, and felt himself agitated by contrary emotions. He was incensed against Siffredi, he could not resolve to abandon Blanch: but, distracted between her and the interest of his glory, it was some time before he could come to any resolution. However, he was determined at last, and thought he had fallen upon a method to preserve the daughter of Siffredi, without renouncing the throne. He feigned submission to the will of Roger, and purposed, while a dispensation for his marriage with his cousin should be soliciting at Rome, to gain the nobles of the realm by his bounty, and establish his power so well, that he should not be obliged to fulfil its conditions.

As soon as he had formed this design, he became more tranquil, and turning to Constance, confirmed to her what the high chancellor had read before the whole assembly. But in the very moment, when he betrayed himself so far as to plight his troth to her, Blanch arrived in the council-hall. She came thither by her father's command, to pay her respects to the princess, and her ears were struck with the words of Henriquez, at her first entrance. Besides, Leontio, being desirous that she should have no cause to doubt of her misfortune, said, while he presented her to Constance, "Daughter, do homage to your queen, and wish her all the sweets of a flourishing reign and happy marriage." This

terrible

terrible stroke overwhelmed the unfortunate Blanch ! in vain she endeavoured to conceal her grief ; she blushed and grew pale alternately, and shook through every limb. Nevertheless, the princess had not the least suspicion of the cause, but attributed the disorder in which she paid her compliment, to the perplexity of a young creature bred up in solitude, and altogether unaccustomed to the court. It was quite otherwise with the young king : the sight of Blanch abashed him ; and the despair he observed in her eyes, transported him quite beside himself. He did not doubt that, judging by appearances, she believed him unfaithful. He would have been less uneasy, could he have spoke to her : but how could he find an opportunity, when all Sicily, as one may say, had its eyes upon him. Besides, the cruel Siffredi deprived him of that hope : for reading the thoughts of these two lovers in their looks, and willing to prevent the mischief which the violence of their passion might create in the state, that minister, in an artful manner, carried his daughter out of the assembly, and set out with her, on his return to Belmont ; resolved, for more reasons than one, to have her married as soon as possible.

They were no sooner arrived, than he made her acquainted with all the horror of her fate, by declaring that he had promised her in marriage to the constable. “ Just heaven ! (cried she, in a transport of grief, which her father’s

presence could not repress) for what direful punishment is the unfortunate Blanch reserved!" Her despair was even so violent, as to suspend all the faculties of her soul. She was seized with an universal chillness, and becoming clay-cold and wan, swooned away in the arms of her father. He was affected with her condition; but, though he shared her affliction with all the tenderness of a parent, his first resolution still remained unshaken. Blanch, at length, recovered her spirits, more through the exquisite sensation of her grief, than through the water which Siffredi sprinkled on her face; which perceiving, while she opened her languishing eyes, "Sir, (said she, with a feeble voice) I am ashamed that you have seen my weakness; but death, which must soon end my torments, will, in a little time, rid you of an unhappy daughter, who has dared to dispose of her heart without your consent." "No, my dear Blanch, (replied Leontio) live, and let virtue resume its empire in your breast. The constable's passion does you honour; he is the most considerable match in the kingdom."—"I esteem his person and his merit, (said Blanch, interrupting him) but, sir, the king had made me hope"—"Daughter, (said Siffredi, cutting her short in his turn) I know all that you can say on that subject. I am not ignorant of your tenderness for the prince, which, at another conjuncture, I should not disapprove. You should even see me eager to ensure you of the hand of

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Henriquez, if the interest of his glory, and that of the state, did not oblige him to bestow it on Constance. It is on that condition only, that the late king designed him for his successor; and would you have him prefer you to the crown of Sicily? Believe me, I sympathize with you in the cruel stroke you suffer, but since we cannot withstand the decrees of destiny, make one generous effort. Your glory is concerned, in concealing from the kingdom the vain hope with which you flattered yourself. Your sensibility for the king may raise reports to your disadvantage; and the only means of preventing them, will be to marry the constable. In short, Blanch, this is no time to deliberate. The king yields you for a throne, and marries Constance. The constable has my promise, which I beg you will perform; and if I must use my authority to bring you to this resolution, I order you to comply."

So saying, he left her to reflect upon what she had heard, hoping, that after having maturely considered the arguments he had used, to support her virtue against her inclination, she would resolve, of herself, to give her hand to the constable. In this he was not mistaken. But, what pangs did it cost the melancholy Blanch, before she came to that determination! she was in a condition, which, of all others, was most worthy of compassion! Grief for seeing her presages of the infidelity of Henriquez changed into certainty,

and for being constrained, in losing him, to give herself away to another, whom she could not love, created in her such violent transports of affliction, that every moment was attended with new torture. "If my misfortune is certain, (cried she) how can I resist it without dying? Cruel destiny! why was I fed with the most delicious hope, when I was doomed to such an abyss of misery! and thou, perfidious lover! how durst thou betroth thyself to another, after thou hadst promised eternal fidelity to me? hast thou so soon forgot the faith which thou hadst sworn? As a punishment for having so cruelly deceived me, may heaven make the nuptial bed, which thou art going to stain with perjury, not a scene of pleasure, but remorse! may the caresses of Constance convey poison to thy unfaithful heart! and may thy marriage be as baleful as mine! Yes, traitor! I will espouse the constable, whom I cannot love, to revenge me upon myself, and punish me, for having so indiscreetly chosen the object of my love. Since my religion forbids me to make an attempt upon my life, the days I have to live shall be nothing else than an unhappy series of trouble and disquiet. If thou still preservest any tenderness for me, thou wilt be mortified at seeing me throw myself into the arms of another; and if thou hast entirely forgot me, Sicily, at least, may boast of having produced a woman, who punished herself for having too simply disposed of her heart."

In such a situation did this unhappy victim of love and duty pass the night that preceded her marriage with the constable ; and Siffredi finding her next day ready to comply with his desire, made haste to take the advantage of that favourable disposition. He sent for the constable to Belmont that same day, and married him privately to his daughter, in the chapel of the castle. It was not enough to renounce a crown, to lose, for ever, a person whom she loved, and bestow herself upon the object of her hatred, but she was also obliged to dissemble her sentiments before a husband who was inflamed with the most ardent passion for her, and naturally of a jealous disposition. That spouse, charmed with the possession of what he held most dear, was continually in her company, and did not even allow her the sad consolation of bewailing her misfortune in secret. When night approached, the daughter of Leontio felt her affliction redouble : but what were her pangs, when her women, after having undressed, left her alone with the constable ! He asked, in a respectful manner, the cause of that sorrow with which she seemed to be depressed ; and Blanch, perplexed by the question, feigned herself indisposed. This deceived her husband at first, but he did not long continue in his mistake : for, as he was really concerned at the condition in which he saw her, and pressed her to go to bed, his intreaties, which she misinterpreted, presented such a cruel

image to her imagination, that, being unable to contain herself any longer; she gave free vent to her sighs and tears. What a sight was this for a man, who believed himself at the very summit of his happiness! He no longer doubted that the affliction of his wife portended something sinister to his love. Nevertheless, though the knowledge of it threw him into a situation almost as deplorable as that of Blanch, he had such command of himself, that he concealed his suspicions. He redoubled his intreaties, and continued to press his spouse to go to rest, assuring her, that he would not interrupt the repose which she seemed so much to want. He even offered to call her women, if she thought that their assistance could alleviate her indisposition. Blanch, encouraged by this promise, told him, that her present weakness only required a little sleep. He pretended to believe her, and going to bed together, they passed a night very different from those which Cupid and Hymen bestow on two lovers inspired by mutual passion.

While Siffredi's daughter indulged her sorrow, the constable endeavoured, within himself, to divine the cause that rendered his marriage so unhappy. He concluded, that there was a rival in the case; but was bewildered in his own imagination, when he attempted to discover who that rival was; and the sole result of his conjectures was, that he was the most unhappy of all mankind. He had al-

ready spent two thirds of the night in these agitations, when his ears were struck with a hollow noise; and he was not a little surprized to hear some body walking softly in the chamber. He believed himself mistaken; for he remembered that he himself had locked the door, after Blanch's women were gone, and drew back the curtain to discover, by the evidence of his eyes, the cause of the noise which he heard: but the light, which had been left in the chimney, was extinguished, and, in a little time, he heard the name of Blanch repeated several times, in a soft and languishing tone. Then his jealous suspicions were inflamed to fury; and his honour alarmed, obliging him to rise, in order to prevent an affront, or take vengeance for it, he seized his sword, and moved towards that side whence the voice seemed to come. Feeling a naked sword opposed to his own, he advanced, the other retired, he pursued, and the other vanished from his pursuit. In vain did he search for him, who seemed to fly, through all the corners of the room, as much as the darkness would allow; he could not find him; he stopt, listened, and heard nothing. All seemed to be enchantment! he went to the door, which he imagined had favoured the flight of the secret enemy of his honour, but he found it fast locked as before. Not being able to comprehend any thing of this adventure, he called those of his people, who were nearest, and as he opened the door for that purpose, stood in
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40 The ADVENTURES of
the passage; and kept himself on his guard,
that the person whom he sought might not
escape.

Some servants hearing his repeated cries,
came running with lights; upon which he
took a candle, and made a new search in the
chamber sword in hand; but found no body,
nor the least mark of any person's having been
there. He did not even perceive the private
door, nor the opening through which there
was a passage. He could not, however, blind-
fold himself, with regard to the circumstances
of his misfortune, but remained in a strange
confusion of thoughts. Should he have re-
course to Blanch, she was too much concerned
in the truth, for him to expect an explanation
from her. He therefore resolved to go and
open his heart to Leontio, after having dis-
missed his servants, telling them, that he
thought he had heard a noise in his chamber,
but was mistaken. He met his father-in-law
coming out of his apartment, at the distur-
bance he had heard, and recounted to him what
had happened, with all the marks of extreme
agitation and profound grief.

Siffredi was surprized at the adventure,
which, though it did not seem natural, he,
nevertheless, believed; and thinking that the
king's love was capable of any thing, was ve-
ry much afflicted with that consideration.
But, far from flattering the jealous suspicions
of his son-in-law, he represented to him, with
an air of assurance, that the voice, which he
thought

thought he heard, and the sword that was opposed to his, could be no other than phantoms of an imagination misled by jealousy; for it was impossible that any body could have gone into his daughter's chamber; that with regard to the melancholy which he had observed in his wife, it might be occasioned by some indisposition; that honour ought not to be answerable for the vicissitudes of temper; that the change of condition in a girl used to live in solitude, who sees herself on a sudden delivered to a man, whom she has not had time to know and to love, might be the cause of those tears, sighs, and that sharp affliction, of which he complained; that love was not to be kindled in maidens of a noble birth, by any other means, than time and assiduity; for which reasons he exhorted him to calm his disquiet, redouble his tenderness and care, in order to dispose Blanch to become more sensible of his merit; and intreated him to return to his chamber, being persuaded that his uneasiness and distrust were injuries done to the virtue of his wife.

The constable made no answer to the remonstrances of his father-in-law; whether he really began to think that he might have been imposed upon by the disorder of his mind, or judged it a wiser course to dissemble than to undertake, in vain, to convince the old man of an event so void of all probability—he returned to his apartment, lay down by his wife, and tried to obtain, by sleep, some respite from

from his disquiet. Blanch, on her side, was not less uneasy than he : she had but too well heard that which alarmed her husband, and could not consider as an illusion an adventure, the secret and motives of which she knew. — Surprized that Henriquez should seek to introduce himself into her apartment, after having so solemnly pledged his faith to Constance, instead of approving or feeling the least glimpse of joy at this step, she looked upon it as a new outrage, and her heart was incensed against him.

While the daughter of Siffredi, prejudiced against the young king, believed him the most unfaithful of men, that unhappy prince, more in love than ever, wished for an interview with Blanch, in order to encourage her against the appearances that condemned him. He would have come sooner to Belmont for that purpose, had he been permitted by the multiplicity of business in which he was necessarily engaged ; but he could not steal away from court before that night. He was too well acquainted with all the private corners of a place where he had been educated, to be under any difficulty of getting unseen into Siffredi's castle ; and he still kept the key of a private door that belonged to the garden, thro' which he got into his old apartment, from whence he pass'd into the chamber of Blanch. — You may imagine the astonishment of that prince when he found a man there, and felt a sword opposed to his own. He had well nigh discovered himself,

and punished on the spot the audacious wretch, who durst lift his sacrilegious hand against his lawful king ; but the respect he owed to Leontio's daughter suspended his resentment. He retired in the same manner as he had entered, and, more afflicted than ever, took the road to Palermo ; where arriving some moments before day, he shut himself up in his apartment. But the agitation of his spirits depriving him of rest, he resolved to return to Belmont ; his safety, honour, and, above all, his love, not permitting him to remain longer ignorant of the least circumstance of such a cruel adventure.

It was no sooner day than he commanded his hunting-equipage to be got ready, and, under pretence of taking that diversion, rode far into the forest of Belmont, attended by his sportsmen and some courtiers. He followed the chace some time, the better to conceal his design ; and when he saw every one eagerly engaged at the heels of the hounds, he separated himself from them, and, all alone, took his way to Leontio's castle. He was too well acquainted with the paths of the forest to lose himself, and his impatience not permitting him to spare his horse, he in a little time over-run the distance that separated him from the object of his love. He was just inventing some plausible pretext to procure for himself a private interview with the daughter of Sifredi, when, crossing a small road that led by one of the park-gates, he perceived hard by

two women, sitting in close conversation at the root of a tree. As he did not doubt that these persons belonged to the castle, the sight of them raised within him some emotion : but he was much more transported, when, the women turning towards him at the noise of his horse's feet, he knew one of them to be his dear Blanch, who had escaped from the castle with Nisa, one of her women, who enjoyed the greatest share of her confidence, to bewail her misfortune at full liberty.

He flew—he threw himself headlong (if I may use the expression) at her feet ; and perceiving in her eyes all the marks of the most profound affliction, was melted at the sight. “ Fair Blanch, (said he) suspend the emotions of your grief : appearances, I confess, represent me guilty to your eyes : but when you are made acquainted with the design which I have formed in your behalf, that which you now look upon as a crime, will appear to you a proof of my innocence and excess of love.” These words, which Henriquez thought capable of moderating, served only to redouble the affliction of Blanch, who would have answer'd him, had not her voice been choaked up with her sighs. The prince, astonished at her disorder, said, “ How, madam, can't I, then, calm your disquiet ? By what misfortune have I lost your confidence ? I, who hazard my crown, and even my life, to keep myself yours ! ”—’Twas then that the daughter of Sifredi, making an effort to explain herself, replied,

plied, "Sir, your promises are now unseasonable.—Nothing henceforth can bind my destiny to yours." "Ah, Blanch! (said Henriquez, interrupting her with warmth) what cruel words are these I hear! Who dares ravish you from my love? Who dares oppose the fury of a king, who would put all Sicily in flames, rather than suffer you to be torn from his hopes?"—"All your power, Sir, (answered Siffredi's daughter in a languishing manner) cannot remove the obstacles by which we are separated.—I am the constable's wife."—"The constable's wife!" (cried the prince, staggering backwards, and unable to go on.) He was confounded and overwhelmed by this unexpected blow: his strength forsook him, and he dropt down at the root of a tree that grew behind him.—Pale, trembling, and depressed, he had nothing free but his eyes, which he fixed upon Blanch, in such a manner as gave her to understand how deeply affected he was with the unhappy tidings she had declared. She, on the other hand, looked upon him with an air which convinced him, that her emotions were little different from those he felt; and these two unfortunate lovers preserved, between them, a silence that had something terrible in it. At length the prince, recollecting himself a little, by an effort of his courage, resumed the discourse, and said to Blanch with a sigh, "What have you done, madam? your credulity has ruined me, and undone yourself."

Blanch, piqued at the prince's seeming to upbraid her, when she thought she had much more cause to complain of him, replied, "What, Sir ! do you add dissimulation to infidelity ? Would you have me discredit my own eyes and ears, and believe you innocent, in spite of the evidence of my senses ? No, Sir, I own myself incapable of such an effort of reason."—"Nevertheless, madam, (answered the king) you are imposed upon by these very witnesses which seem so faithful ; even they have assisted in betraying you ; and that I am innocent and faithful, is no less true than that you are the constable's wife." "How, Sir ! (said she) did I not hear you confirm to Constance the present of your hand and heart ? Have you not assured the nobles of the kingdom, that you would fulfil the conditions of the late king's will ? and has not the princess received the homage of your new subjects, in quality of queen and spouse of Henriquez ? Were my eyes then bewitched ? Say, say, rather, unfaithful prince ! that you did not think Blanch ought to balance in your heart the interest of a throne ; and, without stooping to feign a passion that you no longer feel, and perhaps never felt, confess that the crown of Sicily appeared to you more fixed with Constance than with Leontio's daughter.—You are in the right, Sir : a shining throne was no more my due than the heart of a prince, such as you are. I was too vain to pretend to either ; but you ought not to have indulged

me in my error.—You know the alarms I felt on account of losing you ; a misfortune that then seemed to me almost inevitable. Why did you encourage me with hope ? Would to heaven my fears had not been dissipated ! I should have accused fortune, not you ; and you would have, at least, preserved my heart, tho' at the expence of a hand which no other should ever have obtained. It is now no time to justify yourself : I am the constable's wife ; and that I may spare myself the consequence of a conversation that makes my glory blush, give me leave, Sir, without failing in that respect which I owe you, to quit the presence of a prince, whom I am no longer at liberty to hear."

So saying, she left Henriquez with as much haste as her present weak condition would allow. " Stop, madam ! (cried he) and do not drive to despair a prince, who will rather overturn that throne, which you upbraid him with having preferr'd to you, than fulfil the expectation of his new subjects." " That sacrifice (said Blanch) is at present vain. While I am married to the constable, these generous transports will not avail : since I am then no longer at liberty, it is of small importance to me that you reduce Sicily to ashes, or to whom you give your hand. If I have been weak enough to let my heart be surprized, I shall at least have fortitude enough to stifle its emotions, and let the new king of Sicily see, that the constable's wife is no longer the lover of prince

prince Henriquez." When she pronounced these words, being close to the park-gate, she entered it of a sudden with Nisa; and, locking it on the other side, left the prince overwhelmed with sorrow. He could not recover the blow which Blanch had given him, by the account of her marriage, "Unjust Blanch! (cried he) you have lost all remembrance of our mutual engagement! In spite of our reciprocal vows, we are for ever parted; and the idea which I had cherished of possessing your charms, was no more than a vain illusion. Ah, cruel maid! how dearly did I buy your approbation of my flame!"

Then the image of his rival's happiness presented itself to his fancy, with all the horrors of jealousy; which took such full possession of his soul for some moments, that he was on the point of sacrificing the constable, and even Siffredi himself, to his resentment.—Reason, however, by degrees, allay'd the violence of his transports: but the impossibility he perceived of banishing from Blanch the impressions she retained of his infidelity, threw him again into despair.—He flattered himself with the hopes of effacing them, provided he could converse with her at liberty; for which purpose, judging it necessary to remove the constable, he resolved to have him apprehended, as a person suspected of designs against the state. He accordingly charged with this office the captain of his guards, who, repairing to Belmont, secured his person in the

twilight, and brought him prisoner to the castle of Palermo.

This incident filled all Belmont with consternation. Siffredi set out immediately to offer himself to the king, as security for his son-in-law, and to represent the troublesome consequences of such an arrest. The prince, who expected this step of his minister, and who was resolved, at all events, to obtain a free interview with Blanch, before the constable should be released, had expressly ordered that no person whatever should speak with him till next day. But Leontio, notwithstanding this order, finding means to get access to the king's chamber, presented himself before him, saying, "Sir, if a loyal and respectful subject may be allowed to complain of his master, I am come to complain of you to yourself.—What crime has my son-in-law committed? Has your majesty duly reflected on the eternal reproach you have fixed upon my family; and on the consequences of an imprisonment, which may alienate from your service the hearts of those who fill the most important posts of the realm?" "I have certain intelligence, (replied the king) that the constable carries on a criminal correspondence with the Infant Don Pedro." "Criminal correspondence! (cried Leontio, with surprize) do not believe it.—Your majesty is imposed upon: treason never entered the family of Siffredi; and the constable's being my son-in-law, is enough to screen him from all sus-
picion.

picion.—The constable is innocent ; but other secret views have induced you to arrest him.”

“ Since you talk to me so freely, (replied the king) I will speak to you in the same manner.—You complain of the constable’s being imprison’d : what ! have I not more cause to complain of your cruelty ? ’Tis you, barbarous Siffredi ! who have robbed me of my quiet, and reduced me, by your officious cares, to a condition that makes me envy the lowest of mankind. But don’t flatter yourself that I will enter into your schemes :—my marriage with Constance is resolved upon in vain.”—“ How, Sir ! (cried Leontio, trembling) can you refuse to marry the princess, after having flattered her with that hope before your whole people ?” “ If I deceive their expectation, (replied the king) ascribe it solely to yourself. Why did you lay me under a necessity of promising that which I could not perform ? Who compelled you to fill a paper, which I gave your daughter, with the name of Constance ? You was not ignorant of my intention.—You tyrannized over the heart of Blanch, in making her marry a man whom she did not love. But what right had you to dispose of mine, in favour of a princess whom I hate ?—Have you forgot that she is the daughter of that cruel Mathilda, who, trampling under her feet all the ties of blood and humanity, made my father breathe his last, under all the rigours of captivity ? And shall I espouse her ? No, Siffredi ! lay aside that hope.

hope.—Before you see the torch of these dreadful nuptials lighted, you will see all Sicily in flames, and its ashes quenched in blood !”

“ What do I hear ! (cried Leontio) Ah, Sir ! what a prospect have you shewn me ? What terrible threats !—But I am unseasonably alarmed, (added he, in another tone) you love your subjects too well, to entail upon them such misery. You will not allow yourself to be overcome by love.—You will not tarnish your virtues with the weaknesses of ordinary men. If I have bestowed my daughter on the constable, it was done, Sir, with a view of acquiring for your majesty a valiant subject, who can support with his arm, and the troops which are at his disposal, your interest against that of the prince Don Pedro. I thought that in attaching him to my family, by such intimate ties—” “ Ha ! these are the ties, (cried the prince Henriquez) these are the fatal ties that have undone me ! Cruel friend ! why did you inflict such a heavy stroke upon me ? Did I order you to manage my concerns at the expence of my heart ? Why did you not leave me to support my rights by myself ? Did I want courage to reduce those who should rebel against me ? I should have known how to punish the constable, had he disobeyed me. I know that kings ought not to be tyrants, and that the happiness of their people should be their chief aim ; but must they therefore be the slaves of their subjects, and, from the moment that heaven chooses

them to govern, lose the right that nature grants to all men, of disposing their affections as they please? Ah! if they must not enjoy the privilege of the lowest class of mortals, take back, Siffredi, that sovereign power which you would confirm at the expence of my repose."

"You know very well, Sir, (replied the minister) that your marriage with the princess was, by the late king, made the condition of your succession to the crown."—"And what right (answered Henriquez) had he to establish that disposition? Had he received such an unworthy law, when he succeeded to his brother king Charles! And how came you to be so weak as to submit to the unjust condition? For an high chancellor, methinks, you are very ill informed of our customs. In a word, tho' I have promised my hand to Constance, it was not a voluntary engagement, therefore I do not intend to keep my word; and if Don Pedro, from my refusal, conceives the hope of mounting my throne, without engaging the people in a quarrel, which might cost too much blood, let the sword decide, in single combat, which of us is most worthy to reign." Leontio, not daring to urge him any farther, contented himself with asking, on his knees, the enlargement of his son-in-law, which he obtained.—
 "Go, (said the king to him) return to Belmont, whither the constable will soon follow you." The minister went away, and got back

back to Belmont, persuaded that his son-in-law would not be long behind him. But in this he was mistaken : Henriquez resolved to see Blanch that night, and therefore deferred the release of her husband till next day.

Mean while the constable was tortured with the most cruel reflections : his imprisonment had open'd his eyes, with regard to the true cause of his misfortune : he therefore abandoned himself intirely to his jealousy ; and renouncing the allegiance he had hitherto so commendably preserved, breathed nothing but vengeance. As he concluded that the king would not fail of being with Blanch that night, in order to surprize them together, he begged the governor of the castle of Palermo to let him go out, assuring him that he would return to prison next morning before day. The governor, who was entirely devoted to him, consented to this the more easily, as he knew that Siffredi had already obtained his liberty, and even furnished him with a horse to carry him to Belmont ; where the constable being arrived, he tied his horse to a tree, entered the park by a little door, of which he had the key, and was so lucky as to get into the castle unperceived. He went straight to the apartment of his wife, and concealing himself in an anti-chamber behind a screen, which he found there, proposed to observe from thence all that should pass, and to appear suddenly in Blanch's chamber, at the least noise he should hear.—While he was in this situa-

tion, he saw Nisa come out from her mistress, and retire to the closet where she lay.

Siffredi's daughter, who had easily discerned the motive of her husband's imprisonment, concluded that he would not return that night to Belmont, altho' her father had told her, the king assured him the constable would set out soon after him. She did not doubt that Henriquez would take the advantage of that conjuncture to visit and converse with her at liberty; and in this opinion she waited for the prince, in order to reproach him with an action which might have terrible consequences, in regard to her.—Accordingly, in a little time after Nisa had withdrawn, the partition opened, and the king came and threw himself at Blanch's feet, saying, "Madam, do not condemn before you have given me the hearing: If I have ordered the constable to be imprisoned, consider that it was the only means I had left to justify myself; therefore impute that artifice to yourself alone. Why did you, this morning, refuse to hear me? Alas! to morrow your husband will be enlarged, and I shall never have an opportunity of speaking to you again. Hear me, then, for this last time: if the loss of you makes me the most forlorn of mankind, at least grant me the melancholy consolation of convincing you, that my infidelity is not the cause of my misfortune; for tho' I confirmed to Constance the offer of my hand, it was what I could not dispense with doing, in the situation to

which your father had reduced me.—There was a necessity for my deceiving the princess, for your interest as well as my own, in order to secure to you the crown as well as the person of your lover. This I flattered myself with accomplishing, and had already taken measures to break that fatal engagement; but you have destroyed my plan, and, by giving yourself away too inconsiderately, laid up a fund of eternal sorrow for two hearts, which might have been rendered happy by the most inviolable love!”

He ended this complaint with such visible marks of real despair, that Blanch was touched with his condition, and no longer doubted his innocence, which at first gave her some joy; but afterwards, stung with the consideration of her misfortune; “Ah, Sir! (said she to the prince) after the cruel determination of our fate, you increase my affliction by letting me know that you were not guilty! What have I done? Unfortunate that I am! my resentment has betrayed me! I thought myself abandoned, and in revenge accepted of the constable’s hand, which was presented by my father! I am guilty of the crime, and have been the cause of our mutual mishap! Alas! while I accused you of having deceived me, it was I, too credulous lover! it was I who broke those bonds which I had sworn to keep for ever inviolate! Revenge yourself, Sir, in your turn.—Hate the ungrateful Blanch,—forget her.” “Ah, madam! (said Henriquez;

interrupting her with a melancholy air) how shall I find means to tear from my heart a passion, which even your injustice cannot extinguish!" — "You must however, Sir, make that effort;" (replied Siffredi's daughter, sighing.) "What! are you capable of that effort yourself?" (said the king.) "I cannot promise to succeed; (answered she) but I will spare no pains in the endeavour." "Ah, cruel Blanch! (said the prince) you will easily forget Henriquez, since you are able to form such a design!" "And what can you expect? (replied she, in a more resolute tone) Do you flatter yourself, that I will allow you to continue your addresses? No, Sir, abandon that hope. Though I was not born to be a queen, heaven never formed me to listen to dishonourable love. My husband, as well as you, Sir, is descended from the noble house of Anjou; and if my duty did not raise an insurmountable obstacle to your gallantry, my glory would hinder me from enduring it: I conjure you, therefore, to retire. We must see one another no more." "Heavens! what barbarity! (replied the king) Ah, Blanch! is it possible that you should treat me with such rigour? You do not think then, that your being in the arms of the constable, is enough to overwhelm me? you must also forbid me your sight, the only consolation I had left!" "Fly me, rather, (answered the daughter of Siffredi, shedding some tears) the sight of what one tenderly loves, ceases to be plea-

sing, when the hope of possessing it is lost. Adieu, Sir! Fly from me. You owe that effort to your own glory and my reputation. I ask it also, for my quiet: for, in short, although my virtue should not be alarmed by the emotions of my heart, the remembrance of your tenderness will entail upon me such cruel conflicts, that I shall scarce have strength enough to maintain them."

She pronounced these words so passionately, that she unwittingly overturned a candlestick which stood on a table behind her; and the candle going out in falling, she took it up in order to light it again, for which purpose, she opened the door of the antichamber, and went to the closet of Nisa, who was not yet gone to bed. The king, who waited for her return, no sooner saw her approach with the light, than he made pressing instances to her, that she would suffer his attachment. The constable hearing the prince's voice, rushed into the chamber sword in hand, almost at the same time that his wife entered, and advancing towards Henriquez with all the resentment that his rage inspired, "This is too much, tyrant! (cried he) don't think that I am so base as to endure the affront thou hast done my honour." "Traitor, (replied the king, putting himself in a posture of defence) don't imagine that thou art able to execute thy designs with impunity." With these words they began a combat which was too furious to last long: the constable fearing that Siffredi and

his servants, alarmed at the cries of Blanch, would soon come and oppose his vengeance, fought without caution. His rage divested him of all judgment; he took his measures so ill, that he run upon his adversary's sword, which entered his body to the hilt, and the moment he fell, the king checked his indignation.

Leontio's daughter, touched with the condition in which she saw her husband, and surmounting the natural reluctance she had for him, threw herself on the floor, and supported him with the most eager concern. But that unhappy spouse was too much prepossessed against her, to be affected with these expressions of her grief and compassion. Death, whose approaches he felt, could not suppress the transports of his jealousy; he saw nothing in his last moments, but the happiness of his rival, and the idea appeared so horrid, that recollecting all the strength he had left, he lifted the sword which was still in his hand, and plunged it in the breast of Blanch. "Die, (said he, while he stabbed her) die, unfaithful woman, since the ties of marriage have been too weak to preserve that faith which you swore to me at the altar! And thou, Henriquez, (added he) boast not of thy fate. Thou canst not enjoy my misfortune, and therefore I die satisfied." Having spoke thus, he expired, and his countenance, covered as it was with the shades of death, still retained something fierce and terrible. That of Blanch

presented quite a different spectacle. The blow she received was mortal ; she fell upon the body of her dying, spouse, and the blood of this innocent victim was mixed with that of her murderer, who had executed his cruel resolution so suddenly, that the king had not time to prevent its effects.

The unfortunate prince seeing Blanch fall, uttered a loud cry, and more confounded than she with the blow that robbed her of life, hastened to give her the same succour that she had offered to the constable. But she said, with a faltering voice, “ Sir, you may spare yourself the trouble. I am the victim which un pitying fate demands : may it appease the wrath of heaven, and secure the happiness of your reign !” As she pronounced these words, Leontio, brought thither by her cries, entered the chamber, and struck with the objects that presented themselves to his eyes, became motionless where he stood ; while Blanch, without perceiving him, continuing to speak to the king, said, “ Adieu, prince, cherish my memory. My love and misfortunes claim that favour. Entertain no resentment against my father. Comfort his age and sorrow, and do justice to his zeal. Above all, make my innocence known. This is what I recommend to you more than any thing. Adieu, my dear Henriquez. — I die — receive my last breath.”

So saying, she expired ; and the king having kept a melancholy silence for some time,

said to Siffredi, who was overwhelmed with woe, “ Behold, Leontio, contemplate your own work, and in this tragical event, consider the fruit of your officious care and zeal for me ! ” — The old man was so penetrated with sorrow, that he made no reply — but why should I pretend to describe those things which no language can express ? Let it suffice to say, that both uttered the most moving complaints, as soon as the greatness of their affliction allowed them the use of speech. The king all his life preserved the most tender remembrance of his mistress, and could never be prevailed upon to marry Constance, who being joined by the Infant Don Pedro, they spared nothing to avail themselves of Roger’s last will : but they were at last obliged to yield to prince Henriquez, who subdued all his enemies. As for Siffredi, the grief he felt for having been the cause of so many misfortunes, detached him from the world, and rendered his native country insupportable to him : he therefore abandoned Sicily, and crossing over into Spain, with Portia, the only child he had left, purchased this castle, where he lived near fifteen years after Blanch’s death, and had the comfort before he died, of seeing Portia settled : she married Don Jerome de Silva, and I am the only fruit of that marriage. This (added the widow of Don Pedro de Pinares) is the history of my family, and a faithful account of the misfortunes represented in that picture, which my grandfather, Leontio, ordered to

be drawn as a monument of the fatal adventure to his posterity.

C H A P. V.

The behaviour of Aurora de Gusman, at Salamanca.

ORTIZ, her companions, and I, having heard this relation, withdrew, and left Aurora and Elvira in the hall, where they spent the rest of the day in conversation. Far from being tired with one another, next day when we set out, they were as much affected at parting, as two friends who have long lived agreeably together.

At last we arrived (without meeting any bad accident) at Salamanca*, where we immediately took a house ready furnished, and Dame Ortiz, as we had concerted it, assumed the name of Donna Kimena de Gusman. She had been too long a duenna not to be a good actress; accordingly, going out one morning with Aurora, a waiting-maid, and valet, she repaired to a house where lodgings were let, and where we understood, Pacheco usually lived. Having asked if they had an apartment to be let, they answered in the affirmative, and shewed her into one pretty handsomely furnished, which she hired immediately, giving earnest to the landlady, and telling her, that
it

* Salamanca is one of the largest cities in Spain, situated on the banks of the river Tormes in the kingdom of Leon, and famous for its university.

it was designed for one of her nephews who was coming from Toledo, to study at Salamanca, and would arrive that very day.

The duenna and my mistress having secured this lodging, went home again, and the fair Aurora, without losing time, transformed herself into a cavalier; covering her black hair with a light-coloured tour, painting her eyebrows of the same complexion, and adjusting herself in such a manner as that she might very well pass for a young nobleman. Her carriage was free and easy, and excepting her face, which was a little too handsome for a man, nothing could possibly betray her disguise: her maid, who was to serve in quality of page, took the dress also, and we were under no apprehension of her ill acting, for she had a good modest assurance in her air, which was very well adapted for the part she was to play. In the afternoon, these two actresses being in a condition to appear on the stage, that is, in the lodging which had been taken, I accompanied them thither in a coach, with all the baggage we should have occasion for.

The landlady, whose name was Bernarda Ramirez, received us with great civility, and conducted us to our apartment, where we began to enter into conversation, and agreed with her for our board by the month. Then asking if she had a good many boarders, she replied, “ I have none at present. I might have abundance, if I would take all sorts of people; but I receive none but young noblemen; and I ex-

pect one this evening, who comes from Madrid to finish his studies. His name is Don Lewis de Pacheco; perhaps you may have heard of him." "No, (said Aurora) I know nothing of him, and you will oblige me by letting me know what sort of a man he is, since I am to lodge in the same house with him." "Sir, (answered the landlady, looking at the false cavalier) he is quite a fine figure, and pretty much of your own make. Ah! how happy you will be in one another! By St. Jago, I may boast of having at my house two of the most handsome noblemen in Spain." "This Don Lewis (replied my mistress,) has doubtless a thousand love-intrigues in Salamanca?" "Yes, I'll assure you, (said the old woman) he is a brisk gallant, upon my word. He has no more to do, but shew himself and conquer; and among others, he has quite captivated a lady of youth and beauty, whose name is Isabella, an old lawyer's daughter, who is fond of him to distraction." "And tell me, good mother, (cried Aurora, interrupting her with precipitation) is he as much in love with her?" "He was, (replied Bernarda Ramirez) before his departure for Madrid; but I know not if he retains his passion for her still; for in these points he is not much to be depended upon; but skips from woman to woman, as all young gentlemen usually do."

The good widow had scarce done speaking, when hearing a noise in the court-yard, we

looked through the window, and perceived two men alighting from their horses: these were no other than Don Lewis de Pacheco himself, just arrived from Madrid, with his valet de chambre. Upon which the old woman left us, in order to receive him, and my mistress prepared herself (not without emotion) to play the part of Don Félix. Don Lewis, in a short time, entered our apartment in his boots, and saluted Aurora, saying, "Understanding that a young nobleman of Toledo is a lodger here, I beg leave to express my joy in having him for a companion." While my mistress returned this compliment, Pacheco seemed surprised to see such an amiable cavalier; and could not help telling her, that he had never before beheld any man so handsome and genteelly made. A great many civilities passed on both sides, after which Don Lewis retired to the apartment allotted for him.

While he was shifting and dressing, a sort of page who wanted to deliver a letter to him, meeting Aurora on the stair-case by accident, mistook her for Don Lewis; and giving her the billet, said, "Signior cavalier, though I have never before seen Signior Pacheco, I believe I need not ask if you are he; being persuaded that I am not mistaken?" "No, friend, (replied my mistress, with admirable presence of mind) you are assuredly not mistaken, and you acquit yourself of your commission surprisingly well. I am Don Lewis de Pacheco; you

may return; and I will take care to send an answer very soon. The Page disappearing, Aurora shut herself up with her maid and me, and opening the letter, read these words.—

“ **W** I T H what joy did I receive the news
 “ of your arrival at Salamanca! My
 “ transport had well nigh got the better of
 “ my reason!—But is Isabella still dear to
 “ you? Make haste, and assure her in person
 “ of your constancy: though she will scarce
 “ be able to support the pleasure of finding
 “ you unchanged!”

“ This billet, (said Aurora) proclaims the violence of the author’s passion; and the lady is a rival not to be contemned. I must spare nothing to detach Don Lewis from her, and even to hinder him from seeing her: the undertaking, I own, is difficult; but nevertheless, I don’t despair of success.” Accordingly my mistress having mused a minute or two, added, “ I’ll engage there shall be a breach between them in less than four and twenty hours.” Pacheco having taken a little repose in his own apartment, returned to ours, and renewed his conversation with Aurora, before supper. “ Signior cavalier, (said he to her, with an air of pleasantry) I believe the husbands and lovers will have no cause to rejoice at your arrival in Salamanca; but rather have reason to be uneasy: as for my own part, I tremble for my conquests.” “ Harkee, (an-

swered, my mistress, in the same tone) your fear is not ill grounded : Don Felix de Mendoza is a formidable man, I assure you. I have been in this country before, and know that the women here are not insensible : about a month ago, in my way through this city, I stopt here eight days, and I will tell you in confidence, that I inflamed an old lawyer's daughter.

I perceived Don Lewis disordered at these words. " May one, without being thought impertinent, (said he) ask the lady's name ? "

" How ! without being thought impertinent ! (cried the pretended Don Felix) why should I make a mystery of it to you ? D'ye think me more reserved than other noblemen of my age ? You must not do me such injustice. Besides, between you and me, the object does not deserve such delicacy. She's only a pitiful citizen ; and a man of quality, you know, is never seriously engrossed by such Abigails ; but thinks he does them an honour in debauching them. I will therefore, without ceremony, acquaint you with the name of the lawyer's daughter, which is, Isabella." " And the lawyer, (cried Pacheco, interrupting her with impatience) is not he called Signior Murcia de la Lianna ? " " The very same (replied my mistress) here is a letter which I received from her just now. You may read it, and see whether or not the lady has a kindness for me." Don Lewis casting his eyes over the billet, knew the hand, and was struck dumb with

confusion. "What is the matter? (added Aurora, with an air of astonishment) you change colour! I believe, (God forgive me!) that you have some concern in this lady. Ah! how vexed am I for having spoke of her so freely!"

"I think myself obliged to you for your information, (said Don Lewis, in a transport of anger and disdain) Perfidious, fickle creature! Don Felix, I am bound to you for ever. You have extricated me out of an error, in which I might have remained a long time. I thought myself beloved. Beloved, did I say? I believed myself adored by that Isabella. I had, indeed, some regard for the creature; but now I see she is a coquet who deserves nothing but contempt." "I applaud your resentment, (said Aurora, feigning indignation in her turn) a lawyer's daughter ought to think herself very happy in having such an accomplished nobleman as you for her lover. Her inconstancy is inexcusable; and far from accepting the sacrifice she makes of you, I intend to punish her by slighting her favours." "For my part, (replied Pacheco) the only vengeance that I shall take, is never to see her again." "You are in the right (cried the false Mendoza;) nevertheless, that she may know how much we both despise her, I think each of us should write to her an insulting letter, which I will inclose in one paper, and send as answer to this her billet. But before we proceed to this extremity, consult your heart. Perhaps,

Perhaps, you will, one day, repent of having broke with Isabella." "No; no, (said Don Lewis) I shall never be so weak; and in the mean time, consent to mortify the ungrateful creature, as you have proposed."

I was accordingly sent for paper, pen and ink, and both of them set about composing very obliging letters for the daughter of doctor Murcia de Lianna. Pacheco, in particular, could not find terms strong enough to express his sentiments, and tore five or six half-finished billets, because he thought they were not sufficiently severe. One, however, he was satisfied with at last; and no doubt he had reason so to be; for it contained these words: "Learn to know yourself, my princefs, and be no longer so vain as to believe that I love you. If I be captivated, it must be with other kind of merit than yours, which is scarce sufficient to amuse me for a few moments; and only calculated for diverting the meanest scholars of the university."—This courteous letter being written, and Aurora having finished her's, which was not a whit milder; she sealed them both, and inclosing them together, gave me the packet, saying, "There, Gil Blas, be sure to deliver this to Isabella, this evening.—You understand me? (added she, tipping me the wink) the meaning of which I could easily comprehend." "Yes, Sir, (answered I) the thing shall be done to your wish."

At

At the same time, I went out, and being in the street, said to myself, "Oho! Gil Blas, then it seems, you play the valet in this farce. Well, friend, shew that you have wit enough to perform such a fine part. Signior Don Felix, (as you see) depends so much on your understanding, that he contents himself with giving you a sign only. Is he to blame for that? No. I conceive his meaning: he desires that I should deliver the billet of Don Lewis only. That is the interpretation of the sign, than which nothing could be more intelligible. I did not hesitate in opening the packet, from which I took Pacheco's letter, and carried it to the house of doctor Murcia, having soon informed myself whereabouts he lived. Finding the little page who had been at our lodgings, at the door; Brother, (said I) don't you serve the daughter of Mr. Doctor Murcia? When he answered in the affirmative, "You have such an obliging physiognomy, (I replied) that I take the liberty to desire you will deliver a love-letter to your mistress."

The page asked from whom I brought it; and I no sooner told him that it came from Don Lewis de Pacheco, than he said, "Since it is so, follow me, I have orders to bring you in. Isabella wants to talk with you." I allowed myself, therefore, to be introduced into a closet, where I did not stay long before the lady appeared; and I was struck with the beauty of her face, having never beheld more

de-

delicate features. Her air was affected and childish; but for all that, she had walked without leading strings, for thirty good years at least.

“ Friend, (said she to me, with a smiling air) do you belong to Don Lewis de Pacheco ?”

I answered, that I had been his valet de chambre these three weeks; and then delivered the fatal letter, which she read over twice or thrice, and seemed to distrust the evidence of her own senses. It is very certain, she expected nothing less than such an answer. She lifted up her eyes towards heaven, bit her lips, and for some time discovered by her countenance, the pangs which her heart endured. Then all of a sudden, addressing herself to me,

“ Friend, (said she) is Don Lewis run mad ? Tell me, if you know, why he writes to me in this gallant stile. What dæmon possesses him ? If he had a mind to break with me, could he not have done it without affronting me with such abusive letters ?”

“ Madam, (said I) my master is certainly to blame; but he was in some measure forced to it. If you will promise to keep the secret, I will discover the whole mystery.” “ I do promise; (said she, interrupting me with precipitation) don’t be afraid of my exposing you, but freely explain yourself.” “ Well, then, (I resumed) this is, briefly, the affair. Immediately after he had received your letter, a lady, covered with a very thick veil, came to our lodging, and asking for Signior de Pacheco, spoke with him in private a good

while;

while; and towards the close of the conversation, I overheard her say to him, "You swear to me that you will never see her again: but that is not all—You must also, for my satisfaction, this instant, write to her a billet which I will dictate, and this I exact of you." Don Lewis did as she desired, then putting the letter into my hand, "Enquire, (said he) where Doctor Murcia de Lianna lives, and convey, with address, this paper to his daughter Isabella."

So that you see, Madam, (added I) this disobliging letter is the work of a rival, and consequently, my master is not so much to blame. "O heaven! (cried she) he is more so than I imagined! His infidelity injures me more than the spiteful words which his hand wrote. Ah! the perfidious wretch! he has entered into other engagements.—But (added she, assuming a lofty air) let him abandon himself to his new flame without constraint. I don't intend to thwart him. Tell him, that he had no occasion to insult me, in order to make me leave the field free to my rival; and that I despise such a fickle lover too much, to have the least desire of recalling him." So saying, she dismissed me, and retired very much irritated against Don Lewis; while I went away very well satisfied with myself, and persuaded that if I should set up for a genius, I should soon become a most dextrous cheat.—I returned to our lodgings, where I found Mendoza and Pacheco at supper, conversing together

gether as if they had been old acquaintance. Aurora, perceiving by my chearful countenance, that I had not acquitted myself ill of my commission; "So, thou art returned, Gil Blas, (said she) give us an account of thy message." Being obliged to trust to my own finesse again, I told them that I had delivered the packet with my own hand; and that Isabella, after having read the two billet-doux which it contained, instead of seeming disconcerted, fell a laughing like one who had lost her senses; saying, "Upon my conscience, young noblemen have an admirable stile! It must be owned, that other people don't write half so agreeably." "A fine way of disembarassing herself! (cried my mistress) she must certainly be a finished coquet." "As for me, (said Don Lewis) I should never know Isabella by such behaviour: she must have entirely changed her character during my absence. I could not have thought her such a person, indeed, (replied Aurora) but we must allow that there are women who can assume a great many different shapes: I was once in love with one of these, who made me her dupe a long time: Gil Blas, you can tell that she had an air of virtue, which might have deceived the whole world." "Yes, truly, (said I, mingling in the conversation) she had a look that would have decoyed the most wary. I, myself, might have been trappanned by it."

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The pretended Mendoza and Pacheco burst into a loud laugh, on hearing me talk thus: one, because I bore witness against an imaginary lady; and the other, on account of the expression I had used. We continued discoursing of women who have the art of dissembling; and the result of our conversation was, that Isabella was accused in due form, and convicted of being an arrant jilt.

Don Lewis protested anew, that he would never see her, and Don Felix, by his example, swore he would always have the most perfect contempt for her. After these protestations, they professed a mutual friendship, and promised to conceal nothing from one another. Supper being over, they proceeded to compliments; and at last, parted to go to bed, each in his own apartment. I followed Aurora to her's, where I gave an exact account of the conversation I had with the doctor's daughter; not forgetting the least circumstance. I thought she would have embraced me in the transport of her joy. "Dear Gil Blas, (said she) I am charmed with thy understanding! When one is so unfortunate as to be engaged in a passion which compels us to have recourse to stratagems; it is a great advantage to have in our interests, such a sensible young fellow as thee. Courage, my friend; we have removed a rival who might have given us a world of trouble. This is no bad prognostic: but as lovers are subject to strange relapses, I think we must make a

strong push, and bring Aurora de Gusman on the stage to-morrow. I approved of the scheme, and leaving Signior Don Felix with his page, retired to bed.

CHAP. VI.

The stratagems practised by Aurora, to captivate Don Lewis de Pacheco.

THE two new friends meeting next morning, began the day with embraces, which Aurora was obliged to give and receive, in order to act the part of Don Felix. They went out to walk, and I accompanied them with Chilindron, the valet of Don Lewis; when stopping at the university, to look at the titles of books that were pasted on the gate, which a good many people amused themselves in reading; I perceived a little man among them, who gave his opinion of all the different works that were so published. I observed that he was heard with great attention, which I fancied at the same time, he believed was no more than his due: for he seemed vain and positive, as little men commonly are. “That new translation of Horace, (said he) which you see advertised in such large characters, is a work in prose, composed by an old college-author;—a book in great esteem among the students, who have already consumed four editions of it: and yet there is not one man of taste who has purchased so much as a single copy.” His judgment was, not

not a whit more favourable for the other books, which he ridiculed without exception ; so that, in all likelihood, he was an author himself. I should not have been tired of hearing him to an end ; but was obliged to follow Don Lewis and Don Felix, who being as little pleased with his discourse, as interested in the books which he censured, left him to the enjoyment of his own criticism.

We came home at dinner-time, and my mistress sitting down at table with Pacheco, artfully turned the conversation on her own family. “ My father (said she) is a cadet of the house of Mendoza, and settled at Toledo ; my mother is sister to Donna Kimena de Gusman, who came to Salamanca some days ago, on an affair of importance, with her niece Aurora, the only daughter of Don Vincent de Gusman, whom, perhaps, you know.”

“ No, (replied Don Lewis) but I have often heard of him, as well as of your cousin Aurora. Am I to believe what is reported of her ? I have been assured that nothing equals her understanding but her beauty.” “ As for understanding (resumed Don Felix) she has a pretty good share, and that well cultivated : but I don’t think her so very handsome. People say that she and I very much resemble one another.” “ If that be the case, (cried Pacheco) she deserves the reputation she has got : your features are regular ; your cousin must be quite enchanting. I wish I had an opportunity of seeing and conversing with her.”

her." "I undertake to satisfy your curiosity, (replied the pretended Mendoza) and will carry you to my aunt's house this very afternoon." My mistress, all of a sudden, changed the discourse, and talked on indifferent subjects.—After dinner, while they were preparing to go and visit Donna Kimena, I was beforehand with them, and ran to advertise the duenna, that she might be ready to receive them; then returning instantly, accompanied Don Felix, who conducted Don Lewis to the house of his aunt. But they had scarce entered the house, when they met Dame Kimena, who desired them, by a sign, to make no noise. "Hush, hush, (said she, with a low voice) you will wake my niece, who has been tormented since yesterday, with a terrible head-ach, which has just left her, and the poor child has been asleep about a quarter of an hour." "I am sorry for this disappointment, (said Mendoza;) I was in good hopes of seeing my cousin, and had promised that pleasure to my friend Pacheco." "The affair is not very urgent, (replied Ortiz, smiling) you may defer it till to-morrow." The cavaliers conversed a little while with the old gentleman, and then retired.

Don Lewis carried us to the house of one of his friends, a gentleman, whose name was Don Gabriel de Pedros, with whom we spent the rest of the day, supped, and did not think of coming home till two o'clock in the morning. We had got about half way, when we



stumbled over two men lying stretched upon the ground. Thinking they were unfortunate people who had been assassinated, we stooped to give them assistance, provided it was not too late; and as we endeavoured to inform ourselves of their condition, as well as the darkness of the night would allow, the patrol came up; and the commander taking us at first for the murderers, ordered his men to surround us; but he conceived a more favourable opinion of our morals, when he heard us speak, and, by the help of a dark lantern, saw the faces of Mendoza and Pacheco. His soldiers being ordered to examine the condition of the two men, who we fancied had been slain, found that it was a fat licentiate, with his man, both in liquor, or rather dead drunk. "Gentlemen, (cried one of the guard) I know this Epicure, it is Signior the licentiate Guyomar, rector of our university: notwithstanding the pickle you see him in now, he is a great man, a wonderful genius! There is not a philosopher in Salamanca whom he cannot confute in an argument. He has an unparalleled flow of words: 'tis pity that he is a little addicted to law-suits, the bottle, and a wench. He was, no doubt, on his return from supping with his Isabella, where unluckily his man getting as drunk as himself, they have both tumbled into the kennel. Before the good licentiate was rector, this misfortune frequently happened to him: and you see, honours don't always change the man."

man." We left those drunkards in the hands of the patrole, who undertook to carry them home, and returning to our lodgings, every one went to rest.

Don Felix and Don Lewis getting up about noon, Aurora was the first subject of their discourse. "Gil Blas, (said my mistress to me) go to my aunt Donna Kimena; and ask if Signior Pacheco and I can have the pleasure of seeing my cousin to-day." I went out to acquit myself of this commission, or rather, to concert with the Duenna what was to be done: and when we had taken our measures, I returned to the false Mendoza, saying, "Signior, your cousin Aurora is surprisngly well, and charged me to assure you from her, that your visit will be very agreeable; and Donna Kimena bid me assure Signior Pacheco that he shall always be welcome at her house, on your account."

I perceived that Don Lewis was mightily pleased with these last words: my mistress observed the same, and drew a happy presage from her remark. Immediately before dinner, Signiora Kimena's valet appeared, and said to Don Felix, "Signior, a man from Toledo has been enquiring for you at your aunt's house, and left this note." The pretended Mendoza opened it, and read aloud these words: "If you are desirous of hearing
 " news of your father, and of being made
 " acquainted with other things of consequence
 " to you, fail not, on receipt of this, to re-
 " pair

“ pair to the Black Horse near the university.”
“ —I am, (said he) too curious to hear these things of consequence, not to satisfy my desire instantly. Without taking leave of you, Pacheco, (added he) if I don't return in two hours, you may go by yourself to my aunt's, and I will come to you there, after dinner. You know what Gil Blas has told you from Donna Kimena, and you have a right to make the visit. So saying, he went out, and ordered me to follow him.

You may easily guess, that instead of going to the Black-Horse, we took the road to the house where Ortiz lived, where, as soon as we arrived, Aurora took off her fair-coloured tour, washed and rubbed her eye-brows, dressed herself like a woman, and became a very handsome black-eyed lady, as she naturally was: for her disguise had changed her so much, that Aurora and Don Felix appeared to be two different people. She even seemed a great deal taller, as a woman, than as a man, to which, indeed, her shoe-heels that were excessively high, contributed not a little. When she had improved her charms with all the assistance that art could bestow, she expected Don Lewis with an agitation composed of hope and fear. Sometimes she confided in her beauty and wit, and sometimes was afraid that her attempt would be unsuccessful. Ortiz, on the other side, summoned all her finess to second my mistress; and I, that Pacheco might not see me in the house, like those players who

pear only in the last act, concealed myself till towards the end of the visit, by going out as soon as I had dined.

In short, every thing was in order when Don Lewis arrived. He was received in a very agreeable manner, by lady Kimena, and enjoyed a conversation with Aurora two or three hours long; at the end of which, I came into the room where they were, and addressing myself to the cavalier, "Signior, (said I) my master, Don Felix, cannot be here to day: but begs you will excuse him, because he is in company with three men from Toledo, of whom he cannot disengage himself." "Ah, the little rake! (cried Donna Kimena) he is certainly set in to hard drinking." "No, madam, (I replied) they are discoursing together of very serious affairs. He is heartily sorry that he cannot wait upon you; and ordered me to make his apology to you and Donna Aurora." "O! I'll have none of his apologies; (said my mistress) he knows I have been indisposed, and ought to shew a little more concern for his relation. In order to punish him for his indifference, he shan't see me these fifteen days." "Ah madam! (said Don Lewis) do not form such a cruel resolution: Don Felix is rather to be pitied for not being able to visit you."

They diverted themselves for some time, with this subject, and then Pacheco withdrew. The fair Aurora immediately transformed herself, and resuming the appearance of a cavalier,

lier, returned to the lodgings as soon as she could. "I ask pardon, my dear friend, (said she to Don Lewis) for failing to meet you at my aunt's, but I could not get rid of the people in whose company I was: what consoles me for the disappointment, is, that you have at least, had leisure to satisfy your curiosity. Well, what do you think of my cousin?" "I am enchanted by her! (answered Pacheco) you had reason to say she resembled you. I never saw features more alike: the same turn of face, the same eyes, the same mouth, and tone of voice! There is, however, some difference between you. Aurora is a little taller than you: she is black, and you are fair. You are merry, and she is grave. These are what distinguish you the one from the other. As for understanding, (added he) I do not believe a celestial being can have more than your cousin. In a word, she is a lady of accomplished merit."

Signior Pacheco pronounced these last words with so much vivacity, that Don Felix said, smiling, "Friend, I advise you for the sake of your repose, to go no more to Donna Kimena's. Aurora de Gusman may make your heart ach, and inspire you with a passion." "There is no occasion for another sight of her to make me in love, (said he, interrupting him) that is done already." "I am sorry for it, (replied the pretended Mendoza) for you are not one of those who can attach themselves to one, and my cousin is no Isabella.

I can assure you before-hand, that she will never listen to a lover, except on honourable terms."

"Honourable terms! (replied Don Lewis) sure no body would offer any other to a young lady of her birth. Alas! I should think myself the happiest of men, if she would approve of my addressee, and consent to join her destiny with mine."

"Since you talk in that stile, (said Don Felix) I am interested in your behalf. Yes, I list myself in your service—offer you all my influence with Aurora, and will to-morrow bring over my aunt, who has a great sway over her." Pacheco returned a thousand thanks to the cavalier who made him such fair promises; and we perceived, with joy, that our stratagem could not succeed better. Next day, we increased the love of Don Lewis, by a new invention. My mistress having been with Donna Kimena on pretence to render her favourable to that cavalier, came back and said to him, "I have spoke to my aunt, whom with much difficulty, I have made your friend. She was furiously prejudiced against you: for some body or other had made her believe that you was a downright libertine: but I undertook your defence with eagerness, and at last, destroyed the bad impression she had received of your morals."

"This is not all, (pursued Aurora) you must talk with my aunt, in my presence, and then we shall make sure of her assistance." Pacheco expressed extreme impatience to dis-

course

course with Donna Kimena, and that satisfaction was granted to him next morning, when the false Mendoza conducted him to madam Ortiz, and they three had a long conversation, in which Don Lewis shewed that he had allowed himself to be very much captivated, in a very little time. The artful Kimena feigned to be moved with all the tenderness he expressed, and promised her utmost endeavour to engage her niece to marry him. Pacheco immediately threw himself at the feet of such a kind aunt, and thanked her for her friendship : whereupon Don Felix asked if his cousin was up. " No, (answered the duenna) she is still a-bed, and you cannot see her at present, but return this afternoon, and you may converse with her at leisure." This answer of madam Kimena redoubled (as you may well believe) the joy of Don Lewis, who thought the rest of the forenoon extremely tedious, and went back to his lodgings with Mendoza, who was not a little pleased with observing in him, all the marks of genuine love.

They talked of nothing but Aurora, and when they had dined, Don Felix said to Pacheco, " There's a thought come into my head. I am of opinion, that I should go to my aunt's some minutes before you, and have a little chat with my cousin, that I may, if possible, discover the disposition of her heart towards you." Don Lewis approving this scheme, let his friend go before, and did not set out till an hour after. So, my mistress

made such good use of her time, that she was dressed like a lady, when her lover arrived. "I thought (said the cavalier, after having saluted Aurora and the duenna) to have found Don Felix here." "You will see him immediately, (answered Donna Kimena) he is writing in my closet." Upon which, Pacheco seemed to swallow the trick, and entered into conversation with the ladies. But notwithstanding the presence of the beloved object, he perceived that the hours stole away, without Mendoza's appearing; and as he could not help testifying some surprize at it, Aurora changing countenance all of a sudden, began to laugh, and said to Don Lewis, "Is it possible that you have no suspicion of the trick which has been played upon you? Do an artificial light-coloured tour, and painted eyebrows, make me so unlike myself, that you have been mistaken by them hitherto? Undeceive yourself then, Pacheco, (continued she, resuming an air of gravity) and know that Don Felix de Mendoza and Aurora de Gusman are but one and the same person."

She was not contented with extricating him out of this error, but also owned her passion for him, and informed him of all the steps she had taken towards its success. Don Lewis, no less charmed than surprized with what he heard, threw himself at her feet, exclaiming in a transport of joy, "Ah, beautiful Aurora! may I then believe myself the happy mortal whom you have favoured so much? How

shall I recompense your goodness, which the most perfect love can never enough repay ?” These words were accompanied with a thousand more passionate and tender expressions : after which, the two lovers conferred upon the measures that were to be taken towards the accomplishment of their mutual desires ; and it was resolved that we should set out immediately for Madrid, and bring our comedy to a conclusion by marriage. This design was no sooner formed than put in execution : in fifteen days, Don Lewis espoused my mistress, and their nuptials gave rise to entertainments and infinite rejoicings.

C H A P. VII.

Gil Blas quits his place, and goes into the service of Don Gonzales de Pacheco.

THREE weeks after this marriage, my mistress being desirous of recompensing me for the service I had done her, made me a present of an hundred pistoles, saying, “ Gil Blas, my friend, far from turning you away, I leave it to your choice to stay with me as long as you please ; but my husband’s uncle, Don Gonzales de Pacheco, wants to have you for a valet de chambre. I spoke to him so advantageously of you, that he assured me, I would do him a favour in parting with you to him. He is an old nobleman, (added she) of an excellent character, and you will be quite happy in his service.”

I thanked Aurora for her generosity, and as she had no longer any occasion for me, accepted the post to which I was recommended; the more willingly, as I should still be in the family. One morning, therefore, I went with a message from my new married mistress, to Signior Don Gonzales, who was still a-bed although it was near twelve o'clock. When I entered his chamber, I found him taking some broth which a page had brought in. The old gentleman's whiskers were in papers, his eyes almost quite extinguished, and his face pale and meagre. He was one of those old boys who have been great rakes in their youth, and are not a whit more sedate in their old age. He received me with great civility, and told me that if I would serve him with as much zeal as I had manifested for his niece, I might depend upon living happily. I promised to have the same attachment to him which I had for her, and that moment, he engaged me in his service.

Behold me then with a new master, and heaven knows what sort of a man he was! When he got up, I fancied I saw the resurrection of Lazarus. Paint to your own imagination, a tall body so lean and withered, that when it was naked an anatomist might have taught osteology upon it, with legs so small that they looked like spindles, after he had put on three or four pair of stockings. This living mummy was besides troubled with an asthma, and coughed at every word he spoke.

Having drank chocolate, he called for paper and ink, and wrote a letter, which he sealed and sent away, according to the direction, by the page who had brought the broth; then turning to me, "Friend, (said he) thou art the person whom I intend henceforth to trust with my commissions, especially those which regard Donna Euphrasia, a young lady whom I love, and who is passionately fond of me." "Good God! (said I to myself) how can young people help believing themselves beloved, when this old dotard thinks himself adored!" "Gil Blas, (added he) thou shalt go with me this very day to her house, where I sup almost every night, and thou wilt be charmed with her prudence and reserve: far from resembling those silly coquets who can relish nothing but youth, and are won by appearances only, she has an understanding already mature and judicious, that consults the sentiments of a man, and prefers a lover of delicacy and taste, to one of the most shining exteriors." Signior Don Gonzales did not here finish the eulogium of his mistress, whom he represented as the epitome of all perfection. But he had a hearer not easily persuaded. After the conduct of the actresses, which I had seen, I did not look upon old noblemen as people very happy in their amours. I pretended, however, out of complaisance, to believe all that my master said. I did more, I extolled the discernment and taste of Euphrasia, and was even impudent enough to affirm,

affirm, that she could not have a more amiable gallant.

The good old gentleman did not perceive that I had made game of him; but, on the contrary, applauded my good sense. So true it is, that a sycophant may run any risk with the great, who swallow all kinds of flattery, let it be ever so absurd. The old man having written his letter, pulled some hairs out of his beard with a pair of pincers, cleaned his eyes of a thick gum that filled them, washed his ears and hands, and after having performed his ablutions, painted his whiskers, eyebrows, and hair, of a black colour; continuing longer at his toilet than an old widow who studies to hide the outrages of time upon her. Just as he had done dressing, another gentleman in years, one of his friends, entered, whose name was the Count d'Asumar. But he, far from concealing his grey hairs, supported himself on a cane, and seemed to glory in his old age, rather than in appearing young. "Signior Pacheco, (said he, as he came in) I am come to dine with you." "You are very welcome, Count," (answered my master.) Mean while, having embraced one another, they sat down, and entered into conversation till such time as dinner was ready.

The discourse turned, at first, upon a bull-feast, which had been celebrated a few days before; and as they mentioned the cavaliers who had shewn the greatest vigour and address, the old Count, like another Nestor, who

from talking of the present, always took occasion to praise the past, said, with a sigh, "Alas ! I see no men now-a-days comparable to those I have known heretofore ; and the tournaments are not performed with half the magnificence that they were, when I was a young man." I laughed within myself at the prejudice of honest Signior d'Asumar, who did not confine it to tournaments only ; but I remember, when the dessert was set upon the table, seeing some fine peaches served up, he observed, " In my time the peaches were much larger than they are at present ; nature degenerates every day." " At that rate (said Don Gonzales, smiling) the peaches of Adam's time must have been wonderfully large."

Count d'Asumar staid almost the whole day with my master, who no sooner found himself disengaged, than he went out, bidding me follow him. He went to Euphrasia's, who lodged at the distance of an hundred paces from our house, and found her in a very handsome apartment. She was gaily dressed, and had such an youthful air, that I concluded she was under age, although she was good thirty years old, at least. She was really handsome, and her understanding soon raised my admiration : for she was not one of those coquets, who have nothing to recommend them but idle ribaldry and loose behaviour ; she was modest in her manners, as well as in her conversation, and talked with a great deal of wit, without the least affectation. " O heaven ! said I to myself,

self, is it possible that a person of such delicacy can be a lady of pleasure !” I imagined that impudence was inseparable from all women of her profession, and was astonished to see one with the appearance of modesty ; not reflecting that these princesses know how to assume any shape, and accommodate themselves to the characters of the people of fortune and nobility that fall into their hands. When their gallants are pleased with fire and transport, they are brisk and petulant ; and with those who love reserve, practise a prudent and virtuous behaviour : they are the true cameleons, who change colour according to the humour and disposition of the men whom they approach.

Don Gonzales was none of those noblemen who are taken with your bold beauties : he could not bear ladies of that class ; on the contrary, could relish no woman, unless she had the appearance of a vestal. Euphrasia, therefore, modelled herself accordingly, and shewed that all the good actresses are not employed in the theatre. Leaving my master with his nymph, I went down stairs into a hall, where I found an old chamber-maid, whom I had known a waiting-woman to an actress. Recollecting me immediately, she said, “ What ! is it you, Gil Blas ? you have quitted Arsenia it seems, as I did Constantia.” “ Yes, truly, (answered I) it is a long time since I left her, and went to serve a young lady of fashion. A player’s life is not to my taste ; and there-

fore, I dismissed myself, without deigning to come to the least explanation with Arsenia."

"You was in the right, (replied the chambermaid, whose name was Beatrice) I served Constantia pretty much in the same manner: one morning early I gave in my accounts very coldly, which she received without uttering one syllable, and so we parted cavalierly enough."

"I am extremely glad (said I) that we now meet in a more honourable house: Donna Euphrasia seems to be a sort of woman of fashion, and I believe her character is very good."

"You are not at all mistaken, (said the old waiting-woman) she is of a very good family; and as for her temper, I can assure you there never was one more equal and sweet. She is none of those passionate and difficult mistresses, who find fault with every thing, scold incessantly, torment their domestics, and, in one word, make a hell of their service. I never once heard her grumble; but when I happen to do any thing contrary to her inclination, she reproves me without rage, and never lets one of those epithets escape her, of which your violent dames are so liberal." "My master (I resumed) is also very sweet tempered: he's the best natured mortal alive; and therefore, you and I are much more happy than when we were in the service of actresses."

"A thousand times more happy! (replied Beatrice) instead of leading a life of noise and tumult, I now live, as it were, in a retreat.

No

No man enters these doors, but Signior Don Gonzales. I shall see no body but you in my solitude, for which I am not at all sorry ; for I have had an affection for you a long time, and, more than once, envied the happiness of Laura, in having you for a gallant. But, in short, I hope to be as happy as she ; for, though I have neither her youth nor her beauty, by way of amends, I hate coquetry, and am as faithful as a turtle."

As honest Beatrice was one of those persons who are obliged to make a tender of their favours, because no body will ask them, I was not at all tempted to profit by her advances : I did not desire, however, that she should perceive my contempt, and was even polite enough to express myself in such a manner, as that she did not lose all hopes of engaging my heart. I imagined then, that I had made a conquest of an old chambermaid, but happened, on this occasion, to be deceived : she did not behave in this manner to me, for my own sake only ; her design was to inspire me with love, that she might bring me over to the interest of her mistress, for whom she was so zealous, that she did not mind what it cost her, in promoting her advantage. I found my error next morning, when I carried a billet-doux from my master to Euphrasia. That lady gave me a most gracious reception, and said a thousand obliging things, in which she was joined by her maid : one admiring my physiognomy, while the other observed in me an air

of

of prudence and sagacity. According to them, Signior Don Gonzales possessed a treasure, in having such a valet. In a word, they praised me so much, that I suspected their applause, and even discerned the motives of it ; but I received it, in appearance, with all the simplicity of a fool, and by this counterplot effectually deceived the sharpeners, who, at last, pulled off the mask.

“ Hark’ye, Gil Blas, (said Euphrasia to me) it depends upon thyself to make thy fortune. Let us act in concert, my friend. Don Gonzales is old, and his constitution so crazy, that the least touch of a fever, assisted by an able physician, will carry him off. Let us make the best of the little time he has left, and exert ourselves so, as that he may leave the best part of his estate to me. Thou shalt have a good share of the booty, and thou mayest depend upon my promise, as much as if I had made it before all the notaries of Madrid.” “ Madam, (answered I) you may command your humble servant. You have nothing to do, but to prescribe my conduct, and you shall be satisfied.” “ Very well, (she replied) thou must observe thy master, and give me an account of all his proceedings : when you talk to him in private, don’t fail to turn the conversation upon women, and from thence artfully take occasion to speak well of me. Ply him with Euphrasia as much as possible ; and I again commend it to you, to be very attentive to what passes in the family of the Pachecos : if

you perceive that any relation of Don Gonzales is extremely officious about him, and aims at the succession to his estate, acquaint me with it immediately; that is all I ask, and I warrant I shall send him a-drift in a very little time; for I know the different characters of his relations, and the ridiculous lights in which they may be represented to him; having already prejudiced him pretty successfully, against all his nephews and cousins."

By these instructions, and others which Euphrasia added, I concluded, that this lady was one of those who attached themselves to generous old men. She had lately prevailed upon Don Gonzales to sell an estate, the price of which she had converted to her own use; she extorted from him valuable moveables every day, and, besides, had reason to hope that she would not be forgotten in his will. I pretended to engage willingly, to do all that she desired; and, dissimulation apart, doubted within myself, on my return home, whether I should contribute to impose upon my master, or undertake to detach him from his mistress. The last of these resolutions seemed more honourable than the other, and I felt myself more inclined to fulfil than betray my duty: besides, Euphrasia had made me no positive promise, and that, perhaps, was the occasion of my fidelity's remaining uncorrupted. I resolved, therefore, to serve Don Gonzales with zeal, persuading myself, that if I should be lucky enough to divert his affection from his

idol,

idol, I should be better rewarded for this good action, than for all the bad ones I could commit.

That I might the more easily accomplish what I proposed, I shewed myself entirely devoted to the service of Donna Euphrasia; I made her believe, that I spoke of her incessantly to my master; and accordingly invented fables, which she took for sterling truth. I insinuated myself so much into her good graces, that she thought me entirely in her interest; and still the better to impose upon her, affected to appear in love with Beatrice, who ravished to see, at her age, a young lover at her beck, did not much mind being deceived, provided she was deceived agreeably. When my master and I were each with his own princess, we composed two very different pictures in the same taste. Don Gonzales, pale and withered as I have represented him, when he attempted to ogle, looked like a wretch in his last agonies; and my infant, in proportion to the seeming increase of my passion, assumed still more and more childish airs, and practised all the artifice of an old coquet, which she had been learning forty years at least; having been refined in the service of some of those heroines of gallantry, who can please even in their old age, and die loaded with the spoils of two or three generations.

I was not satisfied with following my master, every evening, to the house of Euphrasia, I sometimes went thither, alone, by day; but at what

what hour soever I went in, I never met with any man, or woman either, of a suspicious appearance; nor could I discover the least trace of infidelity, a circumstance that surprized me not a little; for I could not imagine that such a handsome lady could be exactly true to Don Gonzales. And in this, surely, my judgment was not too rash; for the fair Euphrasia, (as you will presently see) that she might wait with the more patience for my master's estate, was provided with a lover more agreeable to a woman of her age.

One morning, when I carried, as usual, a letter to the princess, I perceived, while I was in her chamber, the feet of a man concealed behind the tapestry. I went away, without seeming to observe them; but although I ought not to be surprized at this object, which was no business of mine, I did not fail to resent it. "Ah, perfidious wretch! (said I to myself, in a passion) ah, wicked Euphrasia! thou art not satisfied with imposing upon a good old gentleman, by persuading him that he is beloved, but thou must also crown thy perfidy, by abandoning thyself to another!" What a fool was I, now I think on it, to moralize in this manner! I ought rather to have laughed at the adventure, and looked upon it as a compensation for the tiresome languid moments she underwent, in her commerce with my master: I should, at least, have done better in holding my tongue, than in seizing this occasion of acting the conscientious valet; but in-

stead

stead of moderating my zeal, I entered warmly into the interest of Don Gonzales, to whom I made a faithful report of what I had seen; I even added, that Euphrasia wanted to seduce me; I concealed nothing of what she had said on that occasion, and it was his own fault if he was not perfectly acquainted with the character of his mistress. He was confounded at the information, and a small emotion of wrath that appeared on his countenance, seemed to presage that the lady should not be unfaithful to him with impunity. "Enough, Gil Blas, (said he) I am extremely sensible of thy attachment, and pleased with thy fidelity; I will go instantly to Euphrasia, load her with reproaches, and break for ever with the ungrateful creature." So saying, he went out accordingly, and dispensed with my attendance, that he might spare me the disagreeable part I had to play during their eclairsissement.

I waited for my master's return with a world of impatience, not doubting, that as he had so much cause to complain of his nymph, he would come back altogether detached from her allurements. On this supposition, I applauded myself for what I had done; I represented to myself the satisfaction which the natural heirs of Don Gonzales would have, when they learned that their kinsman was no longer the sport of a passion so contrary to their interests: I flattered myself, that they would consider me for it, and, in short, that I had distinguished myself from other valets, who are usually

more apt to encourage their masters in debauchery than to reclaim them. I was in love with honour, and reflected, with pleasure, that I should pass for the Corypheus of all domestics. But this idea, agreeable as it was, vanished in a few hours; when my patron arriving, said, "Friend, I have had a very sharp conversation with Euphrasia, who affirms, that thou hast misrepresented her, and art, if she is to be believed, no other than an impostor, altogether devoted to my nephews; out of regard to whom, thou sparest nothing to make me quarrel with her. I saw real tears trickle from her eyes, and she swore, by all that was sacred, that she never made any proposal to thee, nor ever sees a man; Beatrice, who seems to be a good girl, protested the same thing, in such a manner, that my anger was appeased, in spite of my teeth."

"How, Sir, (said I, interrupting him, in a sorrowful manner) do you doubt my sincerity? do you distrust?"—"No, child, (said he, interrupting me in his turn) I do thee all manner of justice: I don't believe thee in a confederacy with my nephews. I am persuaded that thou art concerned for my interest only, and I am obliged to thee: but appearances are deceitful. Perhaps what thou sawest, existed only in thy own imagination; and, in that case, thou mayest guess how disagreeable thy accusation must be to Euphrasia. Be it as it may, she is a person whom I cannot help
4 loving.

loving. I must even make the sacrifice to her which she demands, and that sacrifice is thy dismissal. I am sorry for it, my poor Gil Blas, (added he) and I assure thee, I consented to it with regret ; but I could not do otherwise. What ought to console thee is, that I shall not send thee away unrecompensed : and I intend, moreover, to settle thee with a lady, a friend of mine, where thou wilt live very agreeably."

I was very much mortified to see my zeal thus turned against myself : I cursed Euphrasia, and deplored the weakness of Don Gonzales, who allowed himself to be led by the nose. The good old man being very sensible, that in turning me away, merely to please his mistress, he did not behave in the most manly manner, made amends for his effeminacy, and gilded the pill I was to swallow, with a present of fifty ducats. Next day carrying me to the marchioness of Chaves, he told her, in my hearing, that I was a young man who possessed many good qualities ; that he had a regard for me, but family reasons not permitting him to keep me in his service, he begged she would admit me into her family. She received me that instant, into the number of her domesticks ; so that I found myself translated, all of a sudden, into a new place.

C H A P. VIII.

The character of the marchioness of Chaves, and of those people who usually visited her.

THE marchioness of Chaves was a widow of five and thirty, handsome, tall, and well shaped, who enjoyed a yearly income of ten thousand ducats, without the care and incumbrance of children. I never saw a woman of more gravity, or one who spoke less, though this did not hinder her from being looked upon as the most witty lady in Madrid. The great concourse of people of quality, and men of learning, who daily frequented her house, contributed, perhaps, more than any thing she said, to give her this reputation. But this I will not undertake to decide: let it suffice to say, that her name imported the idea of a superior genius, and that her house was called, by way of excellence, the court of criticism.

There was actually some performance or other read here every day, sometimes new plays, and sometimes other pieces of poetry; but nothing except serious subjects were deemed worthy of attention, humorous pieces being despised; the best comedy, or the most ingenious and witty romance, was looked upon as a feeble production, that deserved no praise; whereas the least serious work, such as an ode, eclogue, or sonnet, passed for the greatest effort of human understanding. But it often happen-

happened that the public did not confirm the sentence of the court ; on the contrary, was sometimes so impolite as to hiss those pieces which had been there very much applauded.

I was chamberlain in this house ; that is, my office consisted in getting every thing ready in the apartment of my lady, for the reception of company, and to set the chairs for the men, and the cushions for the women, after which I stationed myself at the chamber-door, to announce * and introduce the persons who arrived. While I was employed in this office for the first time, the governor of the pages, who, by accident, was then in the antichamber with me, described them all very pleasantly, as they came in. His name was Andrew Molina, naturally dry and satirical, with a good share of understanding. A bishop being the first who presented himself, I announced him, and when he was entered, the governor observed, “ That prelate is a man of a very pleasant character. Having a little credit at court, he would fain make every one believe that he has a great deal, and offers his interest to all the world, without serving any body. One day, meeting at court with a gentleman who saluted him, he stopt, loaded him with civilities, and squeezing his hand, said, “ I am wholly devoted to your service ; pray, Sir, put me to the proof : I shall never

* The announcer is a domestic who stands in the hall on visiting days, and pronounces aloud the names of the company as they come in : from the Latin word *annunciare*.

die satisfied until I have an opportunity of obliging you." The gentleman having thanked him in a very grateful manner, they parted, and the prelate said to one of his followers, "I think I know that man; I have a confused idea of having seen him somewhere."

Immediately after the bishop, the son of a grandee appeared; and when I had introduced him into my lady's chamber, "That nobleman (said Molina) is another original. You must know that he goes often to a house, in order to treat of some important affair, with the gentleman who lives in it, and comes away without remembering to speak a syllable about the matter. But (added the governor, seeing two ladies advance) there come Donna Angela de Pennafiel, and Donna Margarita de Montalvan, two ladies between whom there is not the least resemblance: Donna Margarita, who piques herself on being a philosopher, will undertake the most profound doctors of Salamanca in a dispute, without suffering their arguments to get the better of her argumentation. As for Donna Angela, she does not affect the virtuosi, although her understanding is perfectly well cultivated: her conversation is sensible, her sentiments refined, and her expression delicate, noble, and natural." "This last is an amiable character, (said I to Molina) but the other, in my opinion, is inconsistent with the fair sex." "Not very consistent, (he replied with a sneer) and even a great many men are rendered ridicu-

lous by such a disposition. Madam the marchioness, our lady, (continued he) is also a little tainted with philosophy. What wrangling will there be here to day! God grant that religion may not be concerned in the dispute."

As he spoke these words, we perceived a meagre man come in, with an air of reserve and grim countenance. My governor did not spare him; "This here, (said he) is one of your serious wits who would fain pass for great geniuses, by the favour of a few sentences learned from Seneca, and who are easily detected to be fools, if you examine them a little closely." The next that came in, was a well-shaped cavalier, with a Grecian mien, that is, a very self-sufficient appearance: when I asked who he was, Molina answered, "He is a dramatic poet, who has composed, in his time, an hundred thousand verses, which never brought him in four pence: but in recompence for that, he has procured a considerable settlement, by six lines of prose."

I was going to inform myself of the nature of a fortune got so easily, when I heard a great noise on the stair-case. "Good! (cried the governor) there comes the licentiate Campanario, who gives notice of his approach, before he appears, and beginning to talk at the street door, continues without intermission until he goes away." Sure enough, the whole house rang again with the voice of the thundering licentiate, who, at length, entered the

antichamber with a batchelor of his acquaintance, and did not leave off speaking all the time his visit lasted. "Signior Campanario (said I to Molina) seems to be a great genius." "Yes, replied my governor, he has some bright sallies, quaint expressions, and a good deal of humour : but over and above his being an unconscionable talker, he does not fail to make repetitions ; and, not to over-rate his talents, I believe the agreeable and comic air with which he seasons every thing he says, constitutes his chief merit : for the greatest part of his strokes would do no great honour to a collection of witticisms."

Abundance of other people came in, of whom Molina made very humorous pictures, among which, he did not forget that of the marchioness. "I assure you (said he) our patroness is a lady of a very even temper, in spite of all her philosophy. She is not at all difficult to please, and one undergoes very few caprices in her service. She is one of the most reasonable women of quality I know, and is even without passion ; she has as little taste for gallantry as for play, and loves conversation only ; in short, most ladies would think her way of life insupportably tiresome." The governor, by this eulogium, prepossessed me in favour of my mistress ; nevertheless, some days after, I could not help suspecting that she was not such an enemy to love : and I will declare on what foundation my suspicion was built.

One morning, while she was at her toilet, a little man presented himself to me, about forty years old, of a disagreeable figure, more dirty than the author Pedro de Noya, and very much hump-backed into the bargain. When he told me he wanted to speak with the marchioness, I asked him, from whom? To which he answered, with a haughty look, "From myself; tell her, I am the gentleman of whom she spoke yesterday, to Donna Anna de Velasco." I introduced him into my lady's apartment, and signified his arrival; upon which, she immediately exclaimed in a transport of joy; "Shew him in". She not only gave him a favourable reception, but likewise ordered all her women out of the room; so that the little hunch-back, more happy than an honest man, remained alone with her; while the chambermaids and I made ourselves merry with this fine tête á tête that lasted near an hour; after which, my patroness dismissed the crook-back, loaded with civilities, that shewed how well she was satisfied with his conversation, which, in effect, captivated her so much, that she told me one evening, in private, "Gil Blas, when the man with the hump returns, bring him into my apartment as secretly as possible." I obeyed, and when the little man came back next morning, conducted him by a private staircase, to my lady's chamber. I performed the same office most devoutly, two or three times, without suspecting that there could be any

gallantry in the case. But the malignity which is so natural to mankind, soon inspired me with strange ideas, and I concluded that the inclination of the marchioness was either very whimsical, or that the hunch-back acted the part of a go-between.

Prepossessed with this opinion, I often said to myself, "If my lady is in love with a handsome man, I forgive her; but if she is captivated by this baboon, truly I cannot excuse the depravity of her taste." How much was I mistaken in my patroness! the little hunch-back dabbled in magic, and as his skill had been extolled to the marchioness, who willingly listened to the delusions of such impostors, she honoured him with these private conversations, in which he shewed her things in a glass, taught her to turn the sieve, and for money, revealed all the mysteries of the cabala. Or rather to speak truly, he was a sharper who subsisted at the expence of credulous people, and was said to have several women of quality under contribution.

C H A P. IX.

The incident, in consequence of which, Gil Blas quitted the marchioness de Chaves; and the course he followed afterwards.

I HAD already lived six months with the marchioness de Chaves, and, I confess, was satisfied with my condition; but the destiny I had to fulfil would not permit me to live longer

longer in that lady's house, nor even in Madrid: I will therefore recount the adventure that obliged me to remove from both.

Among my lady's maids, there was one called Portia, who besides her youth and beauty, possessed such an amiable character, that I attached myself to her, without knowing that I must dispute her heart with a rival. The secretary of the marchioness, who was a proud man, and very much addicted to jealousy, being captivated with my princess, no sooner perceived my passion, than (without endeavouring to find out my reception with Portia) he resolved to fight me in single combat, and for this purpose appointed me to meet him one morning, in a private place. As he was a little man, whose head scarce reached my shoulders, and seemed at the same time very weak, I did not think him a very dangerous rival, but repaired with great confidence to the place appointed, in hopes of gaining an easy victory, and making a merit of it with Portia; but the event did not answer my expectation. The little secretary, who had been two or three years at the fencing-school, disarmed me like an infant, and holding the point of his sword to my throat, "Prepare (said he) for the mortal blow, or else give me thy word of honour, that thou wilt this day quit the service of the marchioness de Chaves, and never more think of Portia. I made him that promise, and kept it without reluctance; being ashamed to appear before the rest of the

servants, after my defeat, especially before the fair Helen who had been the cause of our duel. My sole intention in returning to the house, was to carry off my goods and money, which having done, I set out the same day for Toledo, my purse being pretty well furnished, and my back loaded with a bundle composed of my whole wearing apparel : for though I had not engaged to quit Madrid, I thought proper to leave it, at least for some years ; and formed the resolution of making the tour of Spain, and of halting at every town. “ The money I have (said I to myself) will carry me a great way ; for I don’t intend to be extravagant, and when I have no more, I will betake myself again to service. A young man of my accomplishments will find places in abundance, whenever he pleases to go in quest of them.”

I longed, in particular, to see Toledo, whither I arrived at the end of three days, and took up my lodging in a good inn, where I passed for a gentleman of consequence, by the favour of my intriguing dress, which I did not fail to put on, and by the foppish airs which I affected. It was in my own option to establish a correspondence with some handsome women who lived in the neighbourhood ; but understanding that I must begin by spending a good deal of money upon them, I bridled my desires, and feeling still a strong inclination for travelling, after having seen every thing that was curious in Toledo, I left it one

morning by break of day, and took the road to Cuenca, with an intention to go to Arragon. On the second day of my journey, I went into an inn on the road, and just as I sat down to refresh myself, a company of soldiers belonging to the holy brotherhood came in, and calling for wine, fell to drinking. While they were over their cups, I heard them describe a young man whom they had orders to apprehend. "The gentleman (said one of them) is not more than twenty years of age, has long black hair, a good shape, an aquiline nose, and is mounted on a bay horse."

I listened without seeming to give attention to what they said, and truly, I did not concern myself much about the matter. Leaving them in the inn, I set forward on my journey, and had not walked a quarter of a league, when I met a young gentleman of a good mien, mounted on a chesnut-coloured horse. "Upon my faith! (said I to myself) this is the man whom the soldiers are in search of: he has long black hair, and an aquiline nose. I must do him a good office. Sir, (said I to him) give me leave to ask, whether or not you have some affair of honour on your hands?" The young gentleman, without making any reply, looked earnestly at me, and seemed surprised at my question. Upon which, I assured him, that it was not out of curiosity that I had addressed him in this manner; and he was very well convinced of it, when I told him what I had overheard at the inn. "Ge-

nerous stranger, (said he) I will not deny that I have reason to believe myself the person whom those soldiers want to apprehend; and therefore will take another road in order to avoid them." "It is my opinion (I replied) that we should immediately seek some place where you may be secure, and where we may be sheltered from that storm which I see brewing in the air, and which will burst very soon." At that instant we discovered and repaired to a tufted alley of trees that conducted us to the foot of a mountain where we found an hermitage.

It was a large deep grotto that time had scooped in the rock, to which the art of man had added a kind of front, built of pebbles and shell-work, and quite covered with turf: the adjacent field was strewed with a thousand sorts of flowers which perfumed the air, and, hard by the grotto, we perceived a little opening in the rock, from whence issued, with an agreeable noise, a spring of water that run winding along a meadow. At the entrance of this solitary habitation, appeared a holy hermit stooping under the weight of old age, supporting himself with a staff in one hand, and holding in the other a rosary of large beads, composed of twenty courses at least. His head was buried in a brown woollen cap with long ears, and his beard, more white than snow, came down to his middle. When we approached him, "Father, (said I) be so good as to favour us with shelter from the impending



ing storm." "Enter, my children, (replied the anchorite, after having observed me attentively) this hermitage is at your service; and you may stay here as long as you please. As for your horse, (added he, pointing to the forepart of his habitation) he will be very well accommodated in that place." The gentleman who accompanied me, disposed of his beast accordingly, and then we followed the old man into the grotto, which as soon as we had entered, a great shower fell, mingled with flashes of lightning and dreadful claps of thunder. The hermit fell on his knees before an image of St. Pacomo *, which was glued to the wall, and we followed his example. Mean while, the thunder ceased, and we got up; but as the rain continued, and the day was far spent, "My children, (said the old man) I would not advise you to proceed on your journey in such weather, unless you have some pressing affair." The young man and I replied, that we had none that hindered us from halting; and that, if we were not afraid of incommoding him, we would beg leave to pass the night in his hermitage. "You won't incommode me in the least, (said the hermit) but will have reason to complain of your

* St. Pacomo was an Egyptian, who lived in the fourth century, and founded several monasteries, consisting of between twelve and sixteen hundred monks each: his faith is said to have been so effectual, that he walked among serpents, unhurt; and when he had occasion to cross the Nile, was transported from one side to the other on the back of a crocodile.

lódging; for you must lie hard, and I have nothing to offer you but anchorite's fare."

So saying, the holy man made us sit down at a small table, and presenting us with a few onions, a crust of bread, and a pitcher of water, "My sons, (said he) you see my usual repast; but to-day I will commit an excess out of regard to you." He then brought a little cheese, with two handfuls of filberds, and spread them upon the table. The young man, who had no great appetite, did not much honour to the feast; upon which, the hermit observed to him, "I perceive that you are accustomed to better tables than mine, or rather, that sensuality has corrupted your natural taste. I have been in the world, as you are now: the most delicate viands, the most exquisite ragouts, were not too good for my palate: but since I have lived in solitude, I have retrieved the former purity of my taste, and at present can relish nothing but roots, fruits, milk; in a word, that which composed the nourishment of our first parents."

While he spoke in this manner, the young man sunk into a profound reverie, which the hermit perceiving, "My son, (said he to him) you have an oppression on your spirits; may I not know the cause? unbosom yourself to me. It is not curiosity, but charity alone that animates my request. I am of age to give advice; and perhaps your situation requires it." Yes, father, (replied the cavalier, with a sigh) I have, doubtless, occasion for advice,

and I will follow yours, since you are so good as to offer it. I believe, I run no risk in discovering myself to a man of your character.” “No, my son, (said the senior) you have nothing to fear on that score, and may safely trust me with any secret.” In this confidence, the cavalier spoke as follows.

C H A P. X.

The story of Don Alphonso and the fair Seraphina.

I WILL conceal nothing from you, father, nor from the other gentleman who hears me; for, after the generosity he shewed, I should be to blame to distrust him. Listen, therefore, to my misfortunes. I was born in Madrid, and my origin is this——An officer of the German guards, called the Baron de Steinbach, going home one evening, perceived a bundle of white linen at the foot of the stair-case. He took it up and carried it to his wife's apartment, where he found it to be a new-born infant wrapped in very handsome swaddling-cloaths; with a billet importing that it belonged to persons of quality who would one day make themselves known; and that it had been baptized by the name of Alphonso. I am that unhappy infant, and this is all that I know of my birth and parentage: sacrificed to honour or infidelity, I know not whether, my mother exposed me, in order to conceal a dishonourable flame; or seduced by a per-

jured lover, found herself under the cruel necessity of disowning the fruit of her womb.

Be that as it will, the Baron and the lady were touched with my situation; and, as they had no children of their own, determined to educate me under the name of Don Alphonso. As I advanced in years, their attachment to me increased: my flattering and complaisant behaviour attracted their caresses every moment: in a word, I had the good fortune to make myself beloved; they gave me all kinds of masters; my education became their only study; and far from expecting impatiently, that my parents would discover themselves, they seemed, on the contrary, to wish that my birth would always remain a secret. As soon as the Baron found me able to carry arms, he entered me in the service, procured for me an ensign's commission, ordered my small equipage to be got ready; and, to animate me the more to seek occasions of acquiring glory, he represented to me, that the career of honour was open to every body; and that in war I might obtain a name the more glorious, as I should owe it to my self alone. At the same time, he revealed the secret of my birth, which he had hitherto concealed from my knowledge. As I passed for his son in Madrid, and effectually believed myself to be so; I own, this piece of information gave me a good deal of pain: I could not then, nor cannot now think of it without shame; for the more my sentiments seemed to argue me of a noble origin,

the greater my confusion was to see myself abandoned by those who gave me being.

I went to serve in the Low-Countries; but the peace being concluded soon after, and Spain rid of her enemies, though not of those who envied her prosperity, I returned to Madrid, where I received fresh marks of tenderness from the Baron and his lady. About two months after my return, a little page came into my room one morning, and presented to me a billet, conceived pretty nearly in these words; “ I am neither ugly nor ill-shaped; and yet
“ you see me frequently at the window, without paying homage with your eyes. This
“ behaviour but ill answers your gallant appearance; and piques me so much, that I
“ wish I could inspire you with love, to be
“ revenged on your indifference.”

Having read this billet, I did not doubt that it came from a widow called Leonora, who lived opposite to our house, and had the reputation of being very coquettish. I interrogated the page, who was on the reserve at first, but in consideration of a ducat which I slipped into his hand, he satisfied my curiosity; and even undertook to carry an answer, by which I informed his mistress, that I acknowledged my crime, and was already sensible of her being more than half revenged.

I was not at all insensible of this kind of conquest; I kept the house all that day, and took great care to be always at the window, that I might observe the Lady, who did not
for-

forget to shew herself at her's. I made love to her in dumb shew, she answered my signals, and next morning let me know by her page, that if I would be in the street, betwixt eleven and twelve at night, I might converse with her at a parlour window. Though I did not find myself very much in love with such a forward widow, I did not fail to return a very passionate answer, and to wait for night with as much impatience as if I had been violently smitten. In the evening, I went out to walk in the Prado till the hour of assignation; and was no sooner arrived at that place, than a man mounted on a fine horse alighted hard by me, and accosting me hastily, said, "Are not you the son of Baron Steinbach?" When I replied in the affirmative, "You are the person, (said he) who intend to converse with Leonora at her window. Her page has shewn me her letters and your answers, and I have followed you this evening, from your own house hither, to let you know that you have a rival whose pride is very much mortified in being obliged to dispute a heart with such a one as you. I believe I need say no more; we are now in a private place. Let us draw therefore, unless, to avoid the chastisement I prepare for you, you will promise to break off all correspondence with Leonora. You must either sacrifice to me the hopes you have conceived, or forfeit your life immediately." "You ought then (said I to him) to have requested, not demanded that sacrifice; I might, per-

haps,

haps, have granted it to your intreaty, but I refuse it to your threats."

" 'Tis very well, (he replied, after having tied his horse to a tree) draw then: it does not become a person of my quality to stoop so low as to intreat a man of your station: most people of my rank, in the same case, would have revenged themselves in a less honourable way." I was shocked with these last words, and seeing his sword already unsheathed, drew mine also: we attacked one another with such fury, that the combat did not last long: whether he behaved with too much heat, or I had more skill, I know not, but I gave him a mortal thrust, upon which I saw him stagger and fall. Whereupon, minding my own safety only, I mounted his horse, and took the road to Toledo. I durst not return to the Baron's house, being well assured that my adventure would very much afflict him, and when I considered the danger in which I was, I thought I could not get out of Madrid too soon.

In the midst of the most melancholy reflections, I rode the remaining part of the night, and all the morning; but towards noon, was obliged to halt in order to give my horse some rest, and avoid the heat of the day which grew insupportable. I tarried therefore, in a village, till sun-set, after which, I continued my journey, resolving to make but one stage to Toledo. I had got two leagues beyond Illescas, when, towards midnight, I was sur-

prised in the middle of a field, with just such another storm as fell to-day ; upon which I drew near the wall of a garden that I perceived at the distance of a few paces, and not finding a more convenient shelter, stood with my horse as close as I could to the door of a summer-house situated at the end of the wall, over which there was a balcony. As I leaned against the door, I perceived it open, which I ascribed to the negligence of servants ; and alighting, less out of curiosity than for the sake of being better screened from the rain, which did not fail to incommode me while I remained under the balcony, I entered the ground-floor of the summer-house, with my horse, which I led by the bridle.

I employed myself during the tempest, in observing the place, and though I could distinguish nothing but by the lightning that flashed around, it was easy to perceive that the house could not belong to a vulgar owner. I expected still that the rain would cease, intending to proceed on my journey ; but a great light that I observed at a distance, made me change my resolution. Leaving my horse in the summer-house, the door of which I took care to secure, I advanced towards the light, persuaded that there was still somebody in the house, not yet gone to bed, and resolved to desire lodging for that night. Having crossed several walks, I arrived at a saloon, the door of which I found open also ; I entered it, and when I had observed all the mag-

nificance of the place, by the light of a fine crystal branch, I no longer doubted that I was in the house of some rich nobleman. The pavement was of marble, the wainscot very handsome, and curiously gilt, the cornices of admirable workmanship, and the cieling painted by the most skilful masters : but what I took particular notice of, was an infinite number of busts of Spanish heroes, supported on pedestals of jasper, all round the saloon. I had leisure enough to consider all these things, for though I listened attentively from time to time, I neither heard the least noise, nor saw a living creature appear.

There being on one side of the saloon a door unbolted, I half opened it, and perceived a range of rooms, the last of which only was lighted.—“What shall I do? (said I to myself) shall I return, or boldly penetrate to that room?” I concluded that the most judicious step would be to return as I came. But I could not resist my curiosity, or rather the force of destiny that dragged me along : I advanced from one room to another, until I arrived at that in which was the light, that is, a taper burning on a marble table, in a silver candlestick gilt. I at first observed very handsome and gay summer furniture, but in a little time, casting my eyes upon a bed, the curtains of which were half drawn on account of the heat, I saw an object that attracted my whole attention.. This was a young lady, who, notwithstanding the noise of the thunder,

der, lay in a profound sleep. I approached her softly, and by the light of the taper, discovered a complexion and features that quite dazzled me. My heart took the alarm at the sight ! I felt my soul smitten and transported ; but whatever emotions agitated my breast, the opinion which I had of her high rank hindered me from entertaining the least rash thought, and respect prevailed over inclination.

While I glugged myself with the pleasure of contemplating her beauty, she awoke ; and you may guess what was her surprise when she saw a man whom she did not know in her bedchamber at midnight. She trembled when she perceived me, and shrieked aloud ; while I endeavoured to remove her fear, by kneeling before her, and saying, Madam, be not afraid : I come not hither to do you the least injury. I was going on, but her consternation was such that she did not hear me. She called her woman several times, but no body answering, she put on a thin night-gown which lay at the bed's feet, got up hastily, and went into the rooms that I had crossed, still calling her maids and a younger sister who lived under her care. I expected to see all her servants appear, and had reason to apprehend that, without being heard, I should meet with very disagreeable treatment ; but luckily for me, she called to no purpose ; no body came but an old domestic, who could not have given her much assistance, had she had any thing to fear.



fear. Nevertheless, growing more resolute by his presence, she asked with a haughty air, who I was, and how and for what reason I had the boldness to enter her house. I then began to justify myself, and had no sooner told her that I found the door of the summer-house open, than she exclaimed, "Just heaven! what do I presage!"

So saying, she seized the light, and searching all the rooms, one after another, could see neither her maids, nor her sister, but even observed that they had carried off all their baggage. Her suspicions appearing now but too plain, she returned to me, and said, with a great deal of emotion, "Perfidious wretch! add not dissimulation to treachery. It was not chance that brought thee here. Thou art one of the followers of Don Fernando de Leyva, and an associate in his crime: but don't think to escape, I have still people enow to secure thee." "Madam (answered I) do not confound me with your enemies. I know no such person as Don Fernando de Leyva, and am even ignorant of your name and quality. I am an unfortunate man, whom an affair of honour hath obliged to leave Madrid; and I swear by all that is sacred, I would not have entered your house, had it not been for the storm that surprized me! Judge therefore more favourably of me, and instead of believing me an accomplice in the outrage you have suffered, think me rather disposed to revenge it" These last words, and the tone

with which they were pronounced, appeased the lady, who seemed to look upon me no longer as her enemy: but if her indignation vanished, it was only to make room for her grief. She wept bitterly; I was melted by her tears, and no less afflicted than she, although I did not know the cause of her sorrow. I not only wept with her, but impatient to revenge her wrongs, was seized with a transport of fury. "Madam, (cried I) what injury have you received? Speak, I espouse your resentment. Shall I pursue Don Fernando, and stab him to the heart? Name all those whom you would have sacrificed. Command my service. Whatever dangers, whatever misfortunes may be attached to your vengeance, that stranger whom you thought confederate with your enemies, will tempt them all, for your sake."

This transport surprized the lady, and stopt the course of her tears: "Ah, Sir! (said she) pardon my suspicion, on account of the cruel situation in which I am. These generous sentiments have undeceived Seraphina, and even freed me from the shame of seeing a stranger witness to the affront put upon my family.--- Yes, generous unknown! I acknowledge my error, and am far from rejecting your assistance; but I ask not the death of Don Fernando."---"Well, madam, (I replied) what services can you expect of me?" "Sir, (answered Seraphina) the cause of my complaint is this: Don Fernando de Leyva is in love

with my sister Julia, whom he saw by accident at Toledo, where we usually live.--- Three months ago he asked her in marriage of the count de Polan, my father, who refused his consent, on account of an old enmity subsisting between our families.---My sister, not yet fifteen years of age, must have been weak enough to follow the advice of my women, whom Don Fernando has, doubtless, bribed to his interest; and he, informed of our being by ourselves in this country-house, has taken this opportunity of carrying her off.--- I want therefore to know what retreat he has chosen for her, that my father and brother, who have been at Madrid these two months, may take their measures accordingly. In the name of God! (added she) give yourself the trouble of traversing the neighbourhood of Toledo, and of making an exact inquiry about the ravisher:---my family will be eternally indebted to you for the favour."

The lady did not consider, that the employment which she prescribed for me, but ill agreed with the circumstances of a man who could not get out of Castile too soon.--- But how was it possible for her to make this reflection, which did not even occur to me? Charmed with the happiness of finding myself necessary to the most amiable person in the world, I accepted the commission with a transport of joy, and promised to acquit myself with equal diligence and zeal. In effect, I did not wait for day, in order to go and

accomplish my promise ; but quitted Seraphina on the instant, conjuring her to pardon me for the fright I had occasioned, and assuring her that she should hear news of me in a very little time.----I went out as I had come in : but so much ingrossed by the lady, that it was not difficult for me to perceive I was already captivated by her beauty : I was the more confirmed in this, by the eagerness I felt in serving her, and the amorous chimeras which my imagination produced.----I fancied that Seraphina, although possessed by her sorrow, had observed my growing passion, and beheld it perhaps not without some pleasure : I even imagined, that if I could bring her any news of her sister, and the affair should turn out according to her wish, the whole would redound to my honour.

Don Alphonso interrupting the thread of his story in this place, said to the old hermit, “ I beg pardon, father, if, too full of my passion, I enlarge upon circumstances which are, doubtless, tedious to you. “ No, my son, (replied the anchorite) they are far from being tedious : I am even pleased to know how far you are smitten by this young lady of whom you talk, that I may regulate my advice accordingly.”

“ My imagination heated with these flattering ideas, (resumed the young man) I searched two days for Julia’s ravisher : but it was to no purpose for me to make all imaginable inquiry ; I could not discover the least

traces of him. Very much mortified at having reaped no fruit from my researches, I returned to Seraphina, whom I expected to find in the utmost anxiety: but she was much more tranquil than I imagined, and informed me that she had been more lucky than I; that she knew what was become of her sister, having received a letter from Don Fernando himself, importing, that being privately married to Julia, he had placed her in a convent at Toledo. "I have sent his letter to my father, (added Seraphina) I hope the affair will terminate in an amicable manner, and that a solemn marriage will in a short time extinguish the hatred which has so long divided our families."

When the lady had made me acquainted with her sister's fate, she made an apology for the trouble she had given me, and the danger to which she might have imprudently exposed me, by engaging me to pursue a ravisher, without remembering that I had told her I was obliged to fly, on account of an affair of honour:---she excused herself therefore in the most obliging terms, and, as I had need of rest, carried me into the saloon, where we sat down together.---She wore a loose gown of white taffety with black stripes, and a little hat of the same stuff, with a black plume of feathers, which made me guess that she was a widow; tho' she appeared so young, that I did not know what to think of her condition.

If I longed for an explanation on this head, she was no less desirous of knowing who I was; and accordingly, begged that I would tell her my name, not doubting (as she said) that by my noble air, and still more the generous pity that made me enter so warmly into her interests, I belonged to some considerable family.---The question embarrassed me not a little; I blushed, was confounded, and own, that being less ashamed to lye than to tell the truth, I answered, I was the son of the Baron de Steinbach, an officer of the German guards. “Tell me likewise, (replied the lady) for what reason you quitted Madrid? I offer you, beforehand, all the credit of my father, as well as of my brother Don Gaspard: that is the least mark of gratitude I can shew to a gentleman, who neglected the care of his own life to serve me.” I made no difficulty of recounting to her all the circumstances of my duel; upon which she blamed the gentleman whom I had slain, and promised to interest her whole family in my favour:

When I had satisfied her curiosity, I begged her to gratify mine, and asked whether her faith was free or plighted. “Three years ago (she replied) my father obliged me to marry Don Diego de Lara, and I have been a widow fifteen months.”---“Madam, (said I) what misfortune has deprived you of your husband so soon?” “I will tell you, Sir, (resumed the lady) in return for the confidence you have reposed in me.”

“ Don Diego de Lara was a very genteel cavalier, who entertained the most violent passion for me, and, in order to please me, put in practice (every day) all that the most tender and passionate lover could invent, to make himself agreeable to the object of his flame ; but though he possessed a thousand good qualities, he could never touch my heart. Love is not always the effect of assiduities and distinguished merit.----Alas ! (added she) an utter stranger often enchants us at first sight. Well, it was not in my power to love him ; more confounded than charmed with the tokens of his tenderness, to which I was forced to make returns without inclination ; tho’ I, in secret, taxed myself with ingratitude. I likewise found my own situation very unhappy. Unluckily for him, as well as me, his delicacy was still greater than his love. He discovered in my actions and discourse the most secret emotions of my breast, and dived to the very bottom of my soul. He complained incessantly of my indifference, and deemed himself the more unhappy in being unable to please me, because he very well knew that there was no rival in his way : for I was scarce sixteen years old, and, before he offered me his hand, he had gained over all my women, who assured him that no man had as yet attracted my regard.----“ Yes, Seraphina, (he would often say) I wish you had been prepossessed in favour of another, and that alone were the cause of your indifference to me :

my assiduities and your own virtue would triumph over that prejudice ; but I despair of making a conquest of your heart, since it remains untouched by all the love I have shewn." Tired with hearing him repeat the same discourse, I told him, that, instead of troubling his repose and mine by too much delicacy, he would do well to leave his grievances to time. And truly, one of my age was not capable of relishing the refinements of such a delicate passion : so that Don Diego ought to have taken my advice : but seeing a whole year elapsed, without his being farther advanced than the first day, he lost his patience, or rather his reason ; and pretending to have an affair of consequence at court, departed to serve as a volunteer in the Low Countries, where he soon found in battle, that which he went to seek : I mean the end of his torments and life."

After the lady had favoured me with this relation, the singular character of her husband became the subject of our discourse ; in which we were interrupted by the arrival of a courier, who delivered to Seraphina a letter from the Count de Polan.—She asked my permission to read it, and I observed, that while she perused it, she grew pale, and trembled. After having read it, she lifted up her eyes to heaven, heaved a profound sigh, and her face was in a moment covered with tears. I could not behold her grief with tranquillity : I was greatly disturbed ; and, as if I had presaged

the cruel stroke I was to suffer, felt myself chilled with a mortal fear. "Madam, (said I, with a faltering voice) may I ask what are the fatal contents of that letter?" "There, Sir, (replied Seraphina in a melancholy manner, giving me the paper) read yourself what my father writes. Alas! you are but too much concerned."

I was confounded at her words, and, trembling while I took the letter, read :

"YOUR brother Don Gaspard fought
 " yesterday in the Prado *, where he re-
 " ceived a mortal thrust, of which he died
 " this day : having declared in his last mo-
 " ments, that the person who killed him is
 " the son of Baron de Steinbach, an officer of
 " the German guards.—What adds to the
 " misfortune is, that the murderer has escaped
 " me by flight : but wheresoever he conceals
 " himself, I shall spare no pains to find him
 " out ; for which purpose I will write to some
 " governors, who will not fail to apprehend
 " him, if he passes thro' the towns of their
 " jurisdiction ; and by letters directed to other
 " people, I will cause all the roads to be
 " blocked up.

The Count de Polan."

You may easily conceive how all my faculties were disordered by this billet. I remained

* Prado, (which signifies a meadow) is the publick walk at Madrid, as the Park is at London.

for some moments without motion or power of speech ; and even in the midst of this depression, perceiving what a fatal obstruction the death of Don Gaspard would be to my love, was seized with the most violent despair ! I threw myself at the feet of Seraphina, and presenting my naked sword, “ Madam, (said I) spare the Count de Polan the trouble of finding out a man, who might conceal himself from his resentment. Revenge your brother, by sacrificing his murderer with your own hand.—Strike, Madam, and let the same sword that deprived him of life, become fatal to his unfortunate adversary.” “ Sir, (replied Seraphina, affected with my behaviour) I loved Don Gaspard ; therefore, altho’ you killed him honourably, and he brought his misfortune upon himself, you may be assured I enter into the resentment of my father. Yes, Don Alphonso, I am your enemy, and will act against you every thing that the ties of blood and friendship can require : but I will not take the advantage of your bad fortune, which has put you in my power.—The same honour that arms me against you, hinders me from taking a base revenge. The rights of hospitality ought to be inviolable, and therefore I will not repay the service you have done me, with the conduct of an assassin.—Fly, then ; elude, if you can, our pursuit and the rigour of the laws, and save your life from the danger that threatens it.”

“ How,

“How, Madam! (I replied) when you can revenge yourself, do you leave it to the laws, which may perhaps baulk your resentment? Ah! rather pierce the heart of a miserable wretch, who does not deserve your forbearance! No, Madam, do not honour me with such a noble and generous proceeding.—You know not who I am: though I pass in Madrid for the son of the Baron de Steinbach, I am no other than an unfortunate foundling, whom he has brought up, out of pure compassion: I do not even know the authors of my being.” “No matter, (said Seraphina,) (interrupting me with precipitation, as if my last words had given her new pain) were you the lowest of mankind, I will do what honour prescribes.” “Well, Madam, (said I) since the death of a brother cannot provoke you to shed my blood, I will incense you by a new crime; the audacity of which, I hope, you will not excuse.—I adore you—I could not behold your charms without being dazzled with them; and, in spite of the obscurity of my fate, had entertained the hope of making you mine for ever. I was so much in love, or rather so vain, as to flatter myself that heaven (which perhaps favours me by keeping my origin concealed) would disclose it to me one day, when I should be able to tell you my name without a blush.—After this confession, which injures you so much, do you still hesitate in punishing me?” “This rash declaration (replied the lady) would, doubt-

less, offend me at another time, but I pardon it, in consideration of your present agitation : besides, my own anxiety will not permit me to attend to such discourse. Once more, Don Alphonso, (added she, shedding some tears) leave this place, fly from a house you have filled with sorrow ; for every moment you stay, increases my affliction." " Madam, I will no longer resist, (said I, rising) I must banish myself from you ; but think not that, studious of preserving a life which is odious to you, I will go and seek an asylum where I can be secure.—No, no ! I devote myself to your resentment.—I will go to Toledo, wait with impatience for the fate you decree, and exposing myself to your pursuit, advance willingly towards the end of my misfortunes."

So saying, I withdrew : my horse was brought out for me, and I repaired to Toledo *, where I staid a whole week ; and, truly, was at so little pains to conceal myself, that I don't know how I escaped being taken ; for I cannot believe that the Count de Polan, whose chief care was to shut up all the passages against me, would imagine that I could not pass thro' Toledo.—In fine, I yesterday left that city ; where I seemed to be tired of

* Toledo, situated on the Tagus, is the capital of New Castile, the seat of an archbishop, primate of all Spain : it was formerly famous for a circus, capable of containing 150000 people. There is a great manufacture of silk and woollen stuffs in this city ; in which too, are made the best blades in the world ; whence a good sword is frequently called a Toledo.

liberty ; and without keeping any certain road, am come to this hermitage, like a man who has nothing to fear.—You see, father, what engrosses my thoughts, and I crave the assistance of your advice.

C H A P. XI.

The old hermit discovers himself, and Gil Blas perceives that he is among his acquaintance.

ALphonso having ended the melancholy narration of his misfortunes, the old hermit said to him, “ Son, you have been very imprudent in staying so long at Toledo. I look upon all you have recounted, in a light very different from that in which you see it, and your passion for Seraphina is, in my opinion, pure madness. Believe me, you must forget that young lady, who cannot possibly be yours.—Yield, therefore, with a good grace to the obstacles that separate you from her, and follow your destiny, which, in all likelihood, will be productive of many other adventures.—You will, questionless, find some other young lady, who will make the same impression upon your heart, and whose brother you have not slain.”

He was going to add a great many other things, in order to exhort Don Alphonso to have patience, when we saw another hermit, loaded with a wallet well stuffed, enter the hermitage. He was come from the town of Cuenca, where he had made a very successful

gathering; seemed younger than his companion, and wore a red bushy beard. "Welcome, brother Antonio, (said the old Anchorite to him) what news from town?" "Bad enough, (answered the red-haired brother, putting a letter in his hand) that billet will inform you." The senior, having opened and read it with suitable attention, cried, "God be praised! since the plot is discovered, we must regulate our conduct accordingly. Let us change our stile (added he). Signior Don Alphonso, you see a man exposed, like yourself, to the caprice of fortune. I am informed from Cuenca, which is a town about a league from this, that somebody has done me an ill office with justice; all the agents of which are to set out to-morrow for this hermitage, in order to secure my person: but they shan't find the hare in the gin.—This is not the first time that I have been in such dilemmas.—Thank God, I have almost always extricated myself in another shape; for such as you see me, I am neither an old man nor a hermit."

So saying, he stript himself of a long robe which he wore, and appeared in a doublet of black serge with slashed sleeves.—Then he pulled off his cap, untied a string that supported his false beard, and, all of a sudden, assumed the figure of a man between twenty and thirty years of age. Brother Antony, by his example, quitted his hermit's habit, rid himself of his red beard in the same manner as his companion had done, and took out

of an old worm-eaten coffer a shabby short cassock, with which he cloathed himself.— But you may guess my surprise, when, in the person of the old Anchorite, I recollected Signior Don Raphael; and in that of brother Antony, my most dear and faithful valet, Ambrose de Lamela!—" Good God! (cried I, immediately) I find I am among my acquaintance here."—" True, Signior Gil Blas, (said Raphael, smiling) you have found two of your friends when you least expected it. I confess you have some reason to complain of us; but let us forget what is past, and thank heaven for our meeting again. Ambrose and I make a tender of our services; and I can tell you, they are not to be despised. You must not think us the worst of mankind: we neither assault nor assassinate: we seek only to live at the expence of our neighbours; and if theft be a crime, necessity excuses the injustice. Associate with us, and lead a rambling life, which is extremely agreeable, when conducted with prudence; not but, with all our sagacity, the chain of second causes is sometimes such, that we meet with unlucky adventures! What then! we enjoy the good with the better relish on that very account.— We are hardened against inconstant weather, and accustomed to the vicissitudes of fortune."

" Signior Cavalier, (added the false hermit, speaking to Don Alphonso) we make the same proposal to you, which, considering your present situation, I think you ought not

to reject ; for, not to mention the affair that obliges you to conceal yourself, you must certainly be in want of money." " Yes, truly, (said Don Alphonso) and that, I own, increases my chagrin."—" Well, then (replied Raphael) don't leave us : you cannot do better than to join your fortune to ours : you shall want nothing ; and we will baffle all the search of your enemies. We know almost every inch of Spain, having travell'd over it ; and are acquainted with the woods, mountains, and every place proper for an asylum against the brutality of justice." Don Alphonso thanked them for their good will, and being actually without money or resource, resolved to bear them company. I came to the same determination, because I would not leave the young gentleman, for whom I felt a growing friendship.

Having agreed to go all together, we began to deliberate whether we should set out that instant, or, first of all, give some assaults to a full bottle of excellent wine, which brother Antony, the day before, had brought from Cuenca : but Raphael, as a man of the greatest experience among us, represented that, before every thing else, we must think of our safety. He was of opinion, therefore, that we should march all night, in order to gain a very thick wood between Villardesa and Almodabar, in which we should halt, and, being perfectly secure, spend the day in taking our repose. This advice being approved, the false

hermits made two bundles of their baggage and provisions, and laid them in æquilibrium on Don Alphonso's horse. This was done with great expedition; after which we quitted the hermitage, leaving as a prey to justice, the two hermit-robcs, with the white and red beards, two pallets, a table, a rotten chest, two old straw-bottomed chairs, and the image of St. Pacomo.

We walked all night, and began to feel ourselves very much fatigued; when, at day-break, we perceived the wood to which we were bound. The sight of a port gives new vigour to sailors tired with a long voyage!—We accordingly took courage, and at last arrived at the end of our journey before sunrise. Penetrating into the thickest part of the wood, we stopt at a very agreeable spot upon a small glade, surrounded with a good many tall oaks; the branches of which meeting, formed an umbrageous arch, impervious to the heat of the day. Here we unbridled the horse to let him feed, (after we had unloaded him) and sitting down together, took out of brother Antony's wallet some large pieces of bread, with a good many slices of roasted meat, and began to attack them as if for a wager. Nevertheless, in spite of our appetites, we often left off eating to embrace the bottle, which incessantly circulated, passing from the clasp of one into the embraces of another.

To-

Towards the end of the repast, Don Raphael said to Don Alphonso, "Signior Cavalier, after the confidence you have honoured me with, it is but just, that I recount to you the history of my life, with the same sincerity." "It will give me great pleasure," (replied the young man;) "And me in particular (cried I;) for I have an extreme curiosity to hear your adventures, which are doubtless well worth our attention." "That I'll answer for, (replied Raphael) and I intend to commit them to writing one day.— That shall be the amusement of my old age; for I am still young, and would have the volume enlarged: but at present we are fatigued. Let us refresh ourselves with a few hours of sleep: while we three enjoy our rest, Ambrose will watch against all surprise, and then sleep in his turn. Tho' I believe we are very safe in this place, it is always good to be upon our guard." So saying, he stretched himself upon the grass, Don Alphonso did the same, I followed their example, and Lamela stood sentry.

Don Alphonso, instead of taking some repose, kept himself awake with reflecting upon his misfortunes; and I could not close an eye. As for Don Raphael, he soon fell asleep; but awaking an hour after, and seeing us disposed to listen, he said to Lamela, "Friend Ambrose, thou may'st now take a comfortable nap. "No, no, (replied Lamela) I have

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have no inclination to sleep; and tho' I am well acquainted with all the passages of your life, they are so instructive for people of our profession, that I shall be very well entertained in hearing them recounted once more." Don Raphael immediately began the history of his life in these terms.

The End of the FOURTH BOOK.





THE
ADVENTURES
OF
GIL BLAS of Santillane.
BOOK V.



CHAP. I.

The history of Don Raphael.

I Am the son of an actress at Madrid, whose name was Lucinda, famous for her theatrical talents, and still more for her gallantry. As for my father, I cannot, without presumption, assume any one in particular. 'Tis true, I might tell what man of quality was in love with my mother when I came into the world; but that epocha would by no means be a convincing proof of his being the author of my birth. A woman of my mother's profession is so little to be trusted, that even while she appears the most attached to

one nobleman, the almost always substitutes in his place some other person for his money.

There's nothing like putting one's self above scandal : Lucinda, instead of bringing me up in obscurity at her own house, took me by the hand, without ceremony, and carried me to the theatre in a very honourable manner, without giving herself any trouble about the discourse that pass'd at her expence, or the malicious sneers that the sight of me never failed to excite.—In a word, I was her darling, and caress'd by all the men that visited her, so much, that it looked as if nature pleaded with them in my behalf.

I was allowed to pass the twelve first years of my life in all sorts of frivolous amusements :—scarce was I taught to read and write ; and still less pains were taken to initiate me in the principles of my religion : I learned only to dance, sing, and play upon the guitarre.—This was all I could do, when the *márquis de Leganez* asked me as a companion to his only son, who was pretty much of my age. Lucinda willingly complied with his request, and it was then I began to think seriously. Young Leganez was not farther advanced than I : that little nobleman did not seem qualified by nature for the sciences. He hardly knew one letter of his alphabet, although he had been under the instruction of a preceptor fifteen months.—His other masters succeeded no better : he exhausted their patience. They were not, indeed, permitted to use rigour ; but

but expressly ordered to instruct, without tormenting him; and that order, joined to his natural dullness, rendered all their lessons of little or no effect.

But the preceptor invented an excellent expedient to intimidate the young nobleman, without contradicting his father's order. He resolved to flog me, when his pupil deserved punishment; and he did not fail to put his resolution in practice. Not relishing this expedient, I ran away, and complained to my mother of such unjust treatment: but, in spite of all her tenderness for me, she had strength enough to resist my tears, and considering that it was a great advantage for her son to live with the Marquis de Leganez, sent me back immediately. I was now abandoned to the preceptor, who perceiving that his invention had produced a good effect, continued to flog me still, instead of the young nobleman; and, in order to make the deeper impression upon him, disciplined me with great severity. I was sure to pay, every day, for young Leganez; and I may venture to affirm, that he did not learn one letter of his alphabet, which did not cost me an hundred lashes. Judge you what his rudiments stood me in.

The birch was not the only disagreeable thing I suffered in this house: as every body knew me, the meanest servant, even the scullions, reproached me with my birth. This disgusted me so much, that I ran away one day, after having found means to seize the

preceptor's whole stock of ready money, which might amount to an hundred and fifty ducats. Such was the vengeance I took, for the stripes he had so unjustly bestowed upon me. I performed this slight of hand with admirable dexterity, though it was my first essay; and having had the address to baffle the search that was made for me during two days, left Madrid and repaired to Toledo, without being pursued.

I was then just going into my fifteenth year. What a pleasure it was to be independent at that age, and entirely master of my own actions! I soon contracted acquaintance with young people, who polished me up, and assisted me to spend my ducats: I associated with knights of the post, who cultivated my happy disposition so well, that, in a little time, I became one of the most dexterous of the order. At the end of five years, being seized with an inclination to travel, I quitted my confederates, and beginning my peregrinations by Estremadura, went as far as Alcantara: but before I reached that place, finding an opportunity of exerting my talents, I did not let it escape. Being a-foot, and moreover loaded with a pretty heavy knapsack, I frequently halted to repose myself under the trees, that offered me their shade, at a little distance from the highway. In one of these resting-places, I found two lads very well dressed, talking merrily on the grass, while they enjoyed the coolness of the shade. I saluted

them very courteously, and entered into conversation with them, at which they did not seem displeased. The eldest was not more than fifteen, and they seemed both to be extremely raw. "Signior cavalier, (said the youngest to me) we are sons of two rich citizens of Placentia, who longing extremely to see the kingdom of Portugal, in order to satisfy our curiosity, have taken an hundred pistoles each from our parents : and as we travel a-foot, hope to go a great way with that sum. What is your opinion of the matter?"

"If I had so much (I replied) God knows where I should go ; I would visit the four corners of the world. What the devil ! two hundred pistoles ! 'tis an immense sum, and you'll never see the end of it. If it be agreeable to you, gentlemen, (added I) I shall have the honour of accompanying you as far as the city of Almeria, where I am going to take possession of the estate of an uncle, who has been settled in that place twenty years, or thereabouts."

The young citizens assured me, they would be glad of my company. Whereupon, having rested ourselves a little, we set forwards all together, towards Alcantara, where we arrived a good while before night, and went to lodge at a good inn. We asked for a room, and were shewn into one, where there was a press with a key in it. Having bespoke supper, I proposed to my comrades, that we should go and see the town, while it was getting

ing ready. They accepted the propofal, we locked our knapfacks in the prefs, the key of which one of the citizens put in his pocket, and going out of the inn, went to view the churches. While we were in the cathedral, I pretended, all of a fudden, to have an affair of confequence in hand, and faid to my companions, " Gentlemen, I have juft recollected, that a perfon of Toledo defired me to deliver a fhort meffage to a merchant, who lives near this church. Pray wait for me here, and I'll be back in an instant." So faying, I left them, ran to the inn, flew to the cheft, forced the lock, and rummaging the knapfacks of my young cits, found their piftoles. Poor children ! I did not leave them fo much as one to pay for their night's lodging. I carried all off, quitted the town as faft as poffible, and took the road to Merida, without giving myfelf any farther concern about them.

That adventure put me in a condition to travel agreeably: though I was young, I found myfelf capable of conducting myfelf with prudence ; and I may fay, I was pretty old, confidering my years. Having refolved to buy a mule, I put my refolution in practice at the next village. I even converted my knapfack into a portmanteau, and began to affume a little more of the man of confequence. On the third day, I met a man finging vefpers, as loud as he could roar, on the highway. Judging, by his appearance, that he was a

chanter, I accosted him with courage. "Signior batchelor, you sing purely, your heart goes with your profession, I see." "Sir, (answered he) I am a chanter at your service, and amuse myself with clearing my pipes, as you hear."

In this manner we entered into conversation, and I perceived that I had got in company with a most witty and agreeable fellow, about four or five and twenty years old. As he travelled on foot, I made my mule walk slowly, that I might have the pleasure of conversing with him; and, among other things, the discourse turned on Toledo. "I know that city perfectly well, (said the chanter) having lived a good while in it, and I believe have some friends there." "In what place (answered I, interrupting him) did you live at Toledo?" He replied, "in the new street. I lived with Don Vincent de Buena Garra, Don Matthias de Cordel, and two or three more gentlemen of honour: we lodged, eat, and passed our time agreeably together." These words surprized me; for it must be observed, that those gentlemen, whose names he mentioned, were the very sharpers with whom I had kept company at Toledo. "Signior chanter, (cried I) those gentlemen, whom you have named, are of my acquaintance, and I lived with them in the new street." "I understand you, (he replied, smiling) that is to say, you are entered into the company, since I left it three years ago. "I have (said I) quit-

ted these gentlemen, because I was seized with an inclination to travel. I intend to make the tour of Spain ; knowing that I shall improve by experience." " Without doubt (he replied) one must travel before he can have a finished education : it was for this reason that I left Toledo, where I lived very agreeably. I thank heaven (added he) for having met, when I least expected it, a knight of my own order. Let us join, travel together, make attempts on our neighbour's purse, and lay hold of every occasion that presents itself, of exerting our skill."

He made this proposal so frankly, and with such a good grace, that I accepted it. He won my confidence all of a sudden, in bestowing his upon me, and we unbosomed ourselves to one another. I recounted my history to him, and he made no mystery of his adventures to me ; letting me know, that he was just come from Portalegro, whence an unsuccessful trick had obliged him to escape with precipitation, in the dress he now wore. After he had communicated to me his whole affairs, we resolved to go to Merida together, in order to try our fortune, by striking some lucky stroke, if possible ; and then immediately decamping, to remove elsewhere. From that moment, our stock became common betwixt us ; indeed Moralez (so my companion was called) was not in a very brilliant situation. His whole fortune consisted of five or six ducats, with some baggage that he carried

in a wallet: but if I was richer than he, in ready money, he, on the other hand, was more consummate than I, in the art of deceiving mankind.

We mounted my mule by turns, and, in this manner, arriving at Merida, halted at an inn of the suburbs, where my comrade took out of his wallet a dress, in which he was no sooner clothed, than he went to take a turn through the town, reconnoitre the ground, and look for an opportunity of going to work. We considered every object that presented itself, with great attention, and, as Homer would have said, resembled two kites, that cast their eyes abroad, to look for birds on which to prey. In short, we waited, in hopes that chance would afford an occasion, on which we might employ our industry, when we perceived in the street, an old grey-haired gentleman fighting against three men, who pushed hard at him. I was shocked at the inequality of the combat, and, as I am naturally a tilter, flew to the assistance of the old man: Moralez following my example, we attacked the gentleman's three enemies, and obliged them to seek their safety in flight.

The senior was mighty thankful. "We are very glad (said I to him) that we happened to be here so seasonably, to give you assistance: but let us know, at least, who we have had the good fortune to serve; and pray tell us, for what reason those three men would have assassinated you. "Gentlemen, (he re-

plied) I am too much obliged, to refuse the satisfaction you desire. My name is Jerome de Moyadas, and I live on my fortune in this city: one of those assassins, from whom you have delivered me, made love to my daughter, asked her of me in marriage some days ago; and as he could not obtain my consent, attacked me, sword in hand, in order to be revenged." "And may one ask (I replied) your reason for refusing your consent to that gentleman?" "I will tell you (said he) I had a brother, a merchant in this city, whose name was Augustin; two months ago he was at Calatrava, and lodged at the house of Juan Velez de Menbrilla, his correspondent, with whom he was so intimate, that, in order to strengthen their friendship still more, he promised my only daughter Florentina in marriage to his son; not doubting that he had credit enough with me to perform his promise. Accordingly, my brother, upon his return to Merida, no sooner mentioned the affair, than I, out of love to him, consented to the marriage. He then sent Florentina's picture to Calatrava; but alas! had not the satisfaction of finishing the work, for he died three weeks ago; conjuring me, on his death-bed, to dispose of my daughter to none but his correspondent's son. This I promised, and on this account refused Florentina to the gentlemen who assaulted me, although he is a very advantageous match. I am a slave to my word, and every moment expect the son of

Juan Velez de Menbrilla, on whom I will bestow my daughter in marriage, though I never saw either him or his father. I beg pardon, (continued Jerome de Moyadas) for troubling you with this relation : but you yourself exacted it of me."

I listened to him with great attention, and resolving upon a trick, that struck me in the head of a sudden, affected great astonishment, lifted up my eyes to heaven, and turning towards the old man, said, in a pathetic tone, " Ah, Signior Moyadas ! is it possible, that on my first arrival at Merida, I should be so happy as to save the life of my father-in-law ! " The old citizen was strangely surprized at these words, as well as Moralez, who shewed, by his countenance, what a great rogue he took me to be. " What do I hear ? (replied the senior) how ! are you the son of my brother's correspondent ? " " Yes, Signior Jerome de Moyadas, (answered I, with an audacious countenance, while I threw my arms about his neck) I am that happy mortal for whom the adorable Florentina is destined. But before I express my joy in entering into your family, allow me to shed into your bosom the tears which the remembrance of your brother Augustin renews ! I should be the most ungrateful of all mankind, if I was not sensibly touched with the death of a person to whom I owe all the happiness of my life ! " So saying, I again embraced honest Jerome, and covered my eyes with my hand, on pretence of wipe-

ing away my tears. Moralez, who, in a twinkling, perceived the advantage we might reap from a trick of this kind, did not fail to second the imposture, and passing for my valet, even topped me in the sorrow I had manifested for the death of Signior Augustin. "Signior Jerome, (cried he) what a loss you have suffered in your brother's death! he was such an honest man! the very phoenix of commerce, a disinterested merchant, a merchant of integrity; there are few of his fellows to be met with."

We had to do with a simple and credulous man, who, so far from suspecting the cheat, was himself an assistant in it. "And why (said he) did you not come straight to my house? you should not have gone to lodge at an inn: considering the terms on which we are, no ceremony ought to have been observed." "Sir, (answered Moralez, taking upon him to speak for me) my master is, I grant you, a little ceremonious: not but that he is excusable in some shape, in being unwilling to appear before you in his present situation: for we have been robbed in our journey hither, and lost all our baggage." "The young man (said I, interrupting him) tells you nothing but the truth, Signior de Moyadas. This misfortune did not permit me to come to your house: I durst not present myself in this garb, before the eyes of a mistress, who has not as yet seen me; and, for that reason, I waited the return of a valet, whom I have sent to Cala-

trava." "This accident (replied the old man) ought not to have hindered you from coming to stay at my house, where I intend you shall immediately take up your lodging."

So saying, he carried me home with him; and, by the way, we talked of the pretended robbery that I had suffered, when I assured him, that what gave me the greatest concern, was my having lost, with my baggage, the picture of Florentina. Whereupon the citizen observed, with a smile, that I might console myself for that loss, the more easily, as the original was better than the copy. In effect, as soon as we came to his house, he called his daughter, who was not above sixteen years of age, and might have been counted an accomplished young lady; saying to me, "You see the object which my late brother promised to you." "Ah, Signior! (cried I, with a passionate air) you have no occasion to tell me, that this is the amiable Florentina! these charming features are engraved on my memory, and still more upon my heart. If the picture which I lost, and which was only a slight sketch of such perfection, could inflame me with the most ardent passion, judge how I must be transported at this moment!" "You flatter me too much, (said Florentina) for I am not vain enough to imagine, that my qualifications justify your discourse." "Go on with your compliments," (said the father.) At the same time, he left me alone with his daughter, and taking Moralez aside, "Friend,

(said



(said he to him) you have lost all your baggage then, and, without doubt, your money too." " Yes, Sir, (answered my comrade) a great number of banditti poured upon us, near Castil Blazo, and left us nothing but the cloaths on our backs: but we shall, in a very short time, receive bills of exchange, which will set all things to rights again."

" But until those bills arrive, (replied the old man, taking a purse out of his pocket) here are an hundred pistoles at your service."

" O, Sir! (said Moralez) my master would not accept them for the world. I find you don't know him. Zooks! he is a man of great delicacy on these occasions. He is none of those fashionable youngsters, who are apt to take up from every body. He does not love to be in debt, and would rather beg his bread than borrow one farthing." " So much the better, (said the honest citizen) I esteem him the more on that account: I cannot bear to see young men contract debts: I pardon it indeed in people of quality; because it is a privilege they have possessed a long time. I won't (continued he) affront thy master, and since it will only give him pain to offer him money, we must say no more about it." With these words, he was going to put the purse in his pocket again, but my companion held his hand, saying, " Hold, Signior Moyadas, whatever aversion my master has to borrowing, I don't despair of prevailing upon him to accept your hundred pistoles.

"Tis only from strangers he is shy of borrowing: he is not so ceremonious with his own family: he can even demand of his father, with a good grace, whatever money he has occasion for. The young gentleman, you perceive, knows how to distinguish persons, and ought to look upon you, Sir, as a second father."

Moralez, by such discourse, secured the purse of the old man, who came and rejoined us; and finding his daughter and me engaged in mutual compliments, interrupted our conversation, by telling Florentina the obligation he lay under to me; and, on that score, made me professions which convinced me of his gratitude. I laid hold of such a favourable disposition, and told the citizen, that the most sensible mark of acknowledgement he could shew, would be to hasten my marriage with his daughter. He yielded, with a good grace, to my impatience, assuring me, that in three days, at farthest, I should be Florentina's husband, and that instead of six thousand ducats, which he had promised for her dower, he would give me ten, as a proof of his being deeply affected with the service I had done him.

Moralez and I, therefore, lived with the honest man Jerome de Moyadas, kindly treated, and in the agreeable expectation of ten thousand ducats, with which we proposed to make a sudden decampment from Merida. Our joy, however, was checked by fear: we

were apprehensive, that in less than three days, the true son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla would arrive, and cross our good fortune.

This fear was by no means ill founded: for, the very next day, a kind of peasant, loaded with a portmanteau, came to the house of Florentina's father, when I was not at home, though my comrade was present. "Sir, (said the peasant to the old man) I belong to a young gentleman of Calatrava, called Signior de la Menbrilla, who is to be your son-in-law. We are just arrived, and he will be here presently. I came before to give you notice of his approach." He had scarce spoke these words, when his master appeared: a circumstance that surprised the old man very much, and disconcerted Moralez a little.

Pedro, who was a very genteel young fellow, addressed himself to Florentina's father: but the honest citizen did not give him time to finish his discourse, and, turning to my companion, asked the meaning of all this. Then Moralez, who was second to no man on earth in impudence, assumed an air of assurance, and said to the old man, "Sir, these two men belong to the troop of thieves, who robbed us on the highway: I recollect them both very well, particularly him who has the audacity to call himself the son of Signior Juan Velez de la Menbrilla." The old citizen believed Moralez, and, persuaded that the strangers were cheats, said to them. "Gentlemen, you come too late: your scheme is prevented:

Pedro de la Menbrilla has been in my house since yesterday." "Take care of what you say, (answered the young man of Calatrava) you have got an impostor in your family; for you must know, that Juan Velez de Menbrilla has no other son than me." "I know better, (replied the old man) and am not ignorant of your profession: don't you recollect this young man, and remember his master, whom you robbed?" "If I was not in your house, (said Pedro) I would punish the insolence of that cheat, who has the presumption to call me a robber. Let him thank your presence, that restrains my indignation. Sir, (added he) you are imposed upon. I am the young man to whom your brother Augustin promised his niece. If you desire it, I can shew all the letters which he wrote to my father, on the subject of the marriage. Will you not believe it, when you see the picture of Florentina, which he sent to me some time before his death?"

"No, (said the old citizen, interrupting him) neither the picture nor the letters will convince me: I know very well in what manner they fell into your hands, and I advise you, as a friend, to be gone from Merida as soon as you can." "This is too much, (cried the young gentleman in his turn) I will not suffer my name to be stolen with impunity, nor myself to be treated like an highwayman. I know some people in this place, whom I will find, and return to confound the impos-

tor that has prejudiced you against me." So saying, he retired with his valet, and Moralez remained master of the field: nay, this adventure made Jerome de Moyadas resolve to have the marriage celebrated that very day, and he went out instantly, to give the necessary orders for the occasion.

Though my comrade was very well pleased to see Florentina's father in a disposition so favourable for us, he was far from being perfectly at ease; fearing the consequence of the measures which he concluded Pedro would certainly take, he waited for me with impatience, to communicate what had happened. Finding him, at my return, plunged in a profound reverie, "What is the matter, friend? (said I) thou seemest in a brown study." He replied, "If I am, it is not without reason," and informed me of the whole affair; adding, "Thou seest what cause I have to muse. It was thou alone, who rashly threw us into this dilemma. It was a shining enterprise, I own, and would have crowned thee with glory, had it succeeded: but, in all appearance, it will end ill; and it is my advice, that, in order to prevent explanations, we immediately betake ourselves to our heels, with the feather which we have plucked from the honest man's wing."

"Mr. Moralez, (answered I to this proposal) you yield to difficulties, I find, very soon, and don't do a great deal of honour to Don Matthias de Cordel, and the other cavaliers,

liers, with whom you lived at Toledo: one who has served his apprenticeship under such able masters, ought not to be easily alarmed. As for me, who intend to walk in the steps of these heroes, and prove myself a worthy pupil, I will bear up against the obstacle that terrifies you, and make my utmost effort to surmount it." "If you accomplish that, (said my companion) I will prefer you to all the great men in Plutarch."

Just as Moralez had done speaking, Jerome de Moyadas coming in, said to me, "You shall be my son-in-law this very evening: your servant (I suppose) has told you what happened. What do you think of the impudence of the rogue, who would have made me believe that he was the son of my brother's correspondent?" "Signior, (answered I, in a melancholy tone, and with the most ingenuous air I could affect) I find I am not qualified to carry on a deceit. I must sincerely own that I am not the son of Juan Velez de Menbrilla." "What do I hear! (cried the old man, interrupting me with equal precipitation and surprise) how! you not the young man, to whom my brother"——"Pray, Sir, (said I, interrupting him in my turn) be so good as to hear me to an end. I have loved your daughter these eight days, during which, my passion has detained me at Merida; and yesterday, after having come to your assistance, I was about to demand her in marriage, when you kept my mouth, by giving me to under-stand,

stand, that she was destined for another. You told me, that your brother, in his last moments, conjured you to bestow her upon Pedro de la Menbrilla; that you promised to comply with his request, and, in short, that you was a slave to your word. This information, I confess, overwhelmed me, and my love, reduced to despair, inspired me with the stratagem I put in practice. I must tell you, however, that I secretly upbraided myself with the trick I had put upon you; but I flattered myself that you would forgive it, when I should have discovered it. and convinced you, that I am an Italian prince, who travel incognito; and that my father is sovereign of certain vallies situated between the Swiss, the Milanese, and Savoy. I imagined that you would be agreeably surprized, when I should have revealed my birth; and I felt all the pleasure of a delicate and passionate husband, in the hope of declaring it to Florentina, after our marriage. Heaven, (added I, changing my tone) would not indulge me in so much joy: Pedro de la Menbrilla appears, and I must restore him his name, how much soever the restitution will cost me. You are engaged, by your promise, to choose him for a son-in-law; and it is your duty to prefer him to me, without regard to my rank, or compassion for the cruel situation to which you are going to reduce me. I will not pretend to represent, that your brother was only the uncle of your daughter, and that you be-

ing her father, it is more just to acquit yourself of the obligation you owe me, than to make it a point of honour to keep a promise, which is but slightly binding."

"Yes, doubtless, it is so! (cried Jerome de Moyadas) therefore I do not intend to hesitate between you and Don Pedro de Menbrilla. If my brother Augustin was still alive, he would not blame me for giving the preference to a man who saved my life, and who is, moreover, a prince, who does not disdain to ask my alliance. I must be an enemy to my own happiness, and entirely deprived of my understanding, if I did not give you my daughter, and even press the celebration of the marriage." "But, Signior, (I replied) do nothing impetuously, consult your interest only, and, notwithstanding the nobility of my blood"—"Sure you jest! (said he, interrupting me) ought I to hesitate one moment? No, my prince, I most humbly beseech you to honour the happy Florentina with your hand, this very evening." "Well, (said I) be it so; go carry the news yourself, and inform her of her glorious fate."

While the honest citizen flew eagerly to tell his daughter, that she had made the conquest of a prince, Moralez, who had heard the whole conversation, threw himself on his knees before me, saying, "Monsignor the Italian prince, son of a sovereign of the vallies situated between the Swiss, Milanese, and Savoy, give me leave to embrace the feet of your

highness, and testify the excessive joy I feel. Upon the faith of a knave, I look upon you as a prodigy! I thought myself the first man in the world, but truly I strike to you, although you have less experience than I." "What! you are no longer uneasy, I hope," (said I to him.) "O! not at all, (answered he) I am no longer afraid of Signior Pedro; let him come again as soon as he pleases." Moralez and I being now firm in the stirrups, began to regulate the course we should take with the dowry, on which we depended so much, that we could not have thought ourselves more secure of it, had it been already in our pockets. We had not, as yet, got it, for all that, and the catastrophe of the adventure did not answer our expectation.

In a little time, the young man of Calatrava returned, accompanied by two citizens and an alguazil, as formidable, on account of his whiskers and swarthy complexion, as of his employment. Florentina's father being present, "Signior de Moyadas, (said Pedro to him) I have brought hither three creditable people, who know me, and can tell you who I am." "Yes, sure, (cried the alguazil) I can tell, and I certify to all whom it may concern, that I know you. Your name is Pedro, and you are the only son of Juan Velez de la Menbrilla: whoever maintains the contrary is an impostor." "I believe you, Mr. Alguazil (said the honest man Jerome de Moyadas) your evidence is sacred with me,

as well as that of the gentleman merchants who are along with you. I am fully convinced that the young cavalier, who conducted you hither, is the only son of my brother's correspondent: but that does not signify, I am no longer in the mind to give him my daughter."

"Oho! that's another affair, (said the alguazil) I came hither only to assure you, that I know this young man. You are master of your child, and no body can compel you to part with her against your inclination." "Nor do I intend, (said Pedro, interrupting him) to offer violence to the inclination of Signior de Moyadas; but he will give me leave to ask why he has changed his sentiments, or if he has any cause to complain of me. Let me be assured, at least, that I have not lost the sweet hope of being his son-in-law by my own misbehaviour." "I have no cause to complain of you, (replied the old man) and will even own, that it is with regret I see myself under a necessity of breaking my word, for which I conjure you to forgive me. I am persuaded that you are too generous to take it amiss, that I prefer you to a rival, who has saved my life. Here he is, (pursued he, shewing me to the company) this is the person who rescued me from the most imminent danger; and that my excuse may have still more force, I must inform you he is no less than an Italian prince."

At

At these last words, Pedro became mute and confounded; the two merchants stared with the utmost surprize; but the alguazil, accustomed to look upon the worst side of every thing, suspected this wonderful adventure to be a trick, that might turn out to his advantage; he eyed me very attentively, and his good-will being baffled by my features, which were utterly unknown to him, he examined my comrade with the same attention. Unluckily for my highness, he recollected Moralez, and remembering to have seen him in the prison of Ciudad Real, "Ah ha! (cried he) here is one of our customers; I remember this gentleman, who, I assure you, is one of the most perfect sharpers within the kingdoms and principalities of Spain." "Softly, Mr. Alguazil, (said Jerome de Moyadas) the young man, whom you paint so disadvantageously, is the domestic of a prince." "Very well, (replied the alguazil) I know enough to form my resolution accordingly, and judge of the master by the man. I don't doubt that these gallants are two cheats, who have agreed to impose upon you. I know how to manage in such cases; and to let you see that these wits are adventurers, I will carry them instantly to goal. I intend to introduce them to a private conversation with Monsieur the Corregidor; after which, they will feel that whipping is not yet out of fashion." "Hold there, master officer, (replied the old man) don't let us push matters so far: people of

your profession are not afraid of giving pain to a worthy man. May not this valet be a rogue, and his master a man of honour ! Is it a new thing to see sharpeners in the service of princes ?” “ You joke with your princes, (said the alguazil) this young fellow is a knight of the post, you may depend upon it, and I arrest him and his comrade in the king’s name. I have twenty soldiers at the door, who shall drag them to prison, if they refuse to go with a good grace. Come, my prince, (addressing himself to me) let us march.”

I was thunderstruck at these words, as well as Moralez, and our concern rendered us suspected to Jerome de Moyadas ; or rather convinced him, that we actually had a design to defraud him. On this occasion, however, he behaved like a gallant man ; saying to the alguazil, “ Master officer, perhaps your suspicions are false, and perhaps they are but too true. Be it as it will, let us dive no farther into the affair : let these two young cavaliers retire wheresoever they please to go, and I beg you will not oppose their retreat : it is a favour I ask, in order to acquit myself of the obligation I owe to them.” “ Were I strictly to do my duty, (answered the alguazil) I should imprison these gentlemen, without having any regard to your intreaty ; but, for your sake, I will relax a little, provided that they quit the town this instant : for if I meet them to-morrow, egad ! they shall see what will become of them.”

When Moralez and I understood that we were free, we recollected ourselves a little, endeavoured to talk boldly, and affirm that we were persons of honour; but the alguazil silenced us with a fierce look; and I don't know how, these people have an ascendant over us. We were obliged, therefore, to abandon Florentina and her portion to Pedro de la Menbrilla, who, doubtless, became the son-in-law of Jerome de Moyadas, and retire with all speed, taking the road to Truxillo, with the consolation of having, at least, got an hundred pistoles by the adventure. About an hour before night, passing by a little village, with a resolution of going farther before we should halt, we perceived an inn of a pretty good appearance for that place, and the landlord with his wife, sitting on long stones at the door. The husband, a tall, meagre, old fellow, thrumm'd upon a wretched guitarre, for the diversion of his wife, who seemed to listen with pleasure. "Gentlemen, (cried the landlord, when he saw we did not stop) I advise you to halt at this place: you won't find a village within three weary leagues of this; and even there, I assure you, you won't be so well served as here: take my word for it, and walk into my house, where I will entertain you handsomely, at a reasonable rate." We suffered ourselves to be persuaded, and approaching the man and his wife, bid them good even; and having seated ourselves by them, began, all four, to talk of

indifferent subjects. The landlord said he was an officer of the holy brotherhood, and his wife was a fat merry dame, who seemed to understand very well how to vend her commodities.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of twelve or fifteen cavaliers, some mounted on mules, and some a-horse-back, followed by thirty baggage moyls loaded with bales. "Ah ! what a number of princes ! (cried the landlord, at sight of so many people) where shall I find lodging for them all ?" In a moment the village was crouded with men and beasts. There was luckily, near the inn, a vast barn, in which the moyls and the baggage were disposed : the mules and horses belonging to the cavaliers were put in other places ; and as for the men, they did not concern themselves so much about finding beds, as in bespeaking a good supper. The landlord, his wife, and a young maid-servant belonging to the house, were not idle ; they slaughtered all the poultry in their yard, which joined to some ragouts made of rabbits and cats, and a plentiful dish of soup, composed of colliflowers and mutton, furnished entertainment enough for the whole company.

Moralez and I looked at the cavaliers, who from time to time, eyed us also. At last we entered into conversation, and told them, that if it was agreeable we would sup in company. They assured us that we could not do them a greater pleasure : so we sat down altogether

at table. There was one among them who seemed to be the chief, and for whom the rest, though otherwise very familiar, did not fail to shew some deference: 'tis true, indeed, he kept the upper end, talked in an elevated tone of voice, and even contradicted, sometimes, in a cavalier manner, the sentiments of the rest, who, far from replying in the same manner to him, seemed to respect his opinions. The discourse falling, by accident, on Andalusia? and Moralez taking it into his head to praise Seville, this man said to him, "Signior cavalier, you are making the elogium of the city where I first drew breath, or, -at least I was born in its neighbourhood, since the town of Mayrena gave me to the world." "I can say the same thing, (answered my companion) I was likewise born at Mayrena, and I must certainly know your parents: pray, whose son are you?" "I am (said the cavalier) the son of an honest notary, called Martin Moralez." "Upon my faith? (cried my comrade, with emotion) the adventure is extremely singular: you are then my eldest brother, Manuel Moralez." "The very same (said the other) and you are, I suppose, my young brother, Lewis, -whom I left in the cradle, when I quitted my father's house?" "That is my name, indeed," (replied my comrade.) Upon which they both got up, and embraced one another with great affection. Then Signior Manuel said to the company, "Gentlemen, this event is altogether

marvellous ! I have, by accident, met and discovered a brother, whom I have not seen these twenty years and more : allow me to present him to the company." All the cavaliers, who kept themselves standing, out of complaisance, saluted the young Moralez, and loaded him with careffes. Afterwards, we sat down again at table, where we remained all night, without going to bed ; the two brothers sitting by one another, and conversing, by themselves, about their family, while the other guests drank and made merry.

Lewis, after a long conversation with Manuel, taking me aside, said, " All these cavaliers are domestics of the Count de Montanos, whom the king has lately named for viceroy of Majorca. They are conducting their master's equipage to Alicant, where they are to embark. My brother, who is become steward to that nobleman, has proposed to carry me along with him ; and, on account of the reluctance I expressed in leaving you, told me, that, if you would accompany us, he would procure for you a good employment. Dear friend, (added he) I advise thee not to disdain the offer : let us go together to the island of Majorca ; if we find it agreeable, we will stay there, and if we shall be displeased with our situation, we will return to Spain."

I willingly embraced the proposal ; young Moralez and I joined the count's officers, and set out with them from the inn, before day.

Having,

Having, by long marches, gained the city of Alicant, I bought a guitarre, and took off a handsome suit of cloaths, before our embarkation; thinking of nothing but the island of Majorca, and Lewis Moralez was in the same disposition. We seemed to have renounced sharpening altogether. To tell you the truth, we had a mind to pass for persons of honour among the cavaliers in whose company we were; and that kept a check upon our geniuses. At last we went merrily on board, flattering ourselves with the hopes of being at Majorca in a very little time: but scarce had we cleared the gulph of Alicant, when a terrible tempest arose. I might, in this place of my relation, take an opportunity to make a fine description of the storm; to paint the air all on fire, to make the thunder roar, the winds whistle, the mountain billows roll, &c. But all these flowers of rhetoric apart, I assure you the hurricane was violent, and obliged us to bear away for the point of the island of Cabrera, a desert isle, in which there is a little fort, at that time garrisoned by an officer, and five or six soldiers, who gave us a very hospitable reception.

As we were obliged to stay there several days, in order to repair our sails and tackle, we invented different kinds of amusements, to pass the time agreeably. Each followed his own inclinations: some played at Primero, others sought different diversions, and I went to walk through the island, accompanied by

those who loved such exercise. We skipt from rock to rock; for the ground was very uneven, full of stones, and very deficient in good soil. One day, while we considered these parched, withered places, and admired the caprice of nature, that shews herself fruitful or barren as she pleases, our noses were invaded, all of a sudden, with a most agreeable smell. We immediately turned to the eastward, from whence that odour came, and perceived, with astonishment, among the rocks, a large, round, green spot, surrounded with honey-suckles, even more beautiful and sweet-scented than those that grow in Andalusia. We approached, with pleasure, those charming shrubs, which perfumed the air all round, and found that they bordered upon the entry of a very deep cavern, which being large and light, we descended to the bottom of it, turning by steps of stone, the ends of which were adorned with flowers, the whole forming a natural winding stair-case. When we had got down, we saw several little rills of water, which derived their sources from drops that incessantly distilled from the rocks within, creeping along sand more yellow than gold, and losing themselves in the earth.—The water seemed so pure, that we were tempted to drink, and found it so fresh, that we resolved to return next day to the same place, with some bottles of wine, persuaded that we should empty them with vast pleasure.

It

It was with regret we quitted such an agreeable place, and, when we went back to the fort, we did not fail to boast of our discovery ; but the commandant cautioned us, as a friend, against returning to the cavern, with which we were so much charmed. " For what ? (said I to him) Is there any thing to fear ? " " Yes, without doubt, (he replied ;) the corsairs of Algiers and Tripoli sometimes land on this isle, to water at that spring, and one day surprized two soldiers of my garrison, whom they made slaves." It was in vain for the officer to tell us this with a very serious air : he could not persuade us ; for we believed that he jested : and next day I returned to the cavern, with three more of my companions, without providing ourselves with fire-arms, to shew that we dreaded nothing. Young Moralez would not be of the party, choosing rather to stay with his brother, and play in the fort.

Having descended, as the day before, to the bottom of the cave, we cooled some bottles of wine, that we had brought along with us, in the rivulets ; and while we drank them deliciously, playing on the guitarre, and conversing pleasantly together, we saw several men appear at the mouth of the cavern above, with large whiskers, turbans, and Turkish dress.—We imagined that it was a part of the Count's domestics, with the commandant of the fort, who had thus disguised themselves in order to frighten us ; and, prepossessed with

this fancy, began to laugh, letting no less than ten of them come down, without thinking of defending ourselves. We were, however, soon undeceived in a melancholy manner, and convinced that it was a corsair, who came with his people to carry us off.—“Surrender, you dogs, (he cried, in the Castilian tongue) or you shall be all put to the sword.” At the same time his followers presented their carabines to us, and we should have undergone a fine discharge, had we made the least resistance.—We preferred slavery to death, and gave our swords to the pirate, who ordered us to be loaded with chains, and conducted to his vessel, which was not far off: then setting sail, he steered with a fair wind towards Algier.

In this manner were we punished for neglecting the caution of the officer of the garrison. The first thing that the corsair did, was to rifle us of all the money we had.—What a fine windfall for him! The two hundred pistoles taken from the young citizens of Placentia, the hundred which Moralez had received from Jerome de Moyadas, and which unluckily I had about me, were all swept away without mercy. My companions had also their purses well furnished. In short, it was an excellent prize. The pirate was rejoiced at his good luck; and the rascal, not satisfied with our plunder, insulted us with his railery, which we did not feel half so much as the necessity that compelled us to bear it.—

After a thousand jokes, he ordered the bottles of wine which we had cooled at the fountain, and which his people had taken care to seize, to be brought to him, and began to empty them with his crew, drinking to our health by way of derision.

During this conjuncture, the countenances of my comrades express'd the pain they felt; and their slavery mortified them the more, because they had formed the most delightful idea of their voyage to the island of Majorca, where they had laid their account with leading a most delicious life.—As for me, I had fortitude enough to project a plan of conduct for myself; and, less afraid than my fellows, entered into conversation with the rallier, and even returned his jokes with a good grace. Pleased with my behaviour, “Young man, (said he) I like thy disposition: for, in the main, instead of fighting and groaning, it is better for one to arm himself with patience, and sail with the stream.—Play to us a small air, (added he, observing that I had a guitarre) let us see what thou canst do.” I obeyed him, as soon as he had ordered my arms to be unchained, and began to thrum upon my guitarre in such a manner as acquired his applause.—I had, indeed, learned under the best master in Madrid, and played on that instrument pretty well.—I sang likewise, and my voice gave no less satisfaction.—All the Turks in the vessel express'd the pleasure they felt in hearing me, by gestures of admiration: a cir-

cumstance from which I concluded, that their taste for musick was not extremely delicate. The pirate whispered to me, that I should not be an unhappy slave ; and that one of my talents might depend upon an employment that would make my captivity very supportable.

I felt some joy at these words ; but flattering as they were, I had abundance of uneasiness on the score of this occupation, with the promise of which the corsair regaled me. When we arrived at the port of Algier *, we saw a great number of people assembled to receive us, who, as soon as we were landed, shouted with joy : besides, the air resounded with the confused noise of trumpets, Moresco flutes, and other instruments used in that country, which formed a symphony more loud than agreeable. The cause of these rejoicings was a false report which had spread thro' the city, importing that the renegado Mehemet (this was our pirate's name) had perished in attacking a large Genoese vessel : so that all his friends, informed of his return, were eager in their expressions of joy.

We had no sooner set foot on shore, than I and my companions were conducted to the palace of Dey Solyman, where a Christian secretary, examining us one by one, asked our names, ages, country, religion, and qualifications. Then Mehemet, shewing me to the

* Algier, a city on the coast of Barbary, possessed by the Moors, who are at perpetual war with the Spaniards, and under the protection of the Turk.

Dey, extolled my voice, and assured him, that I played ravishingly on the guitarre. This was enough to determine Solyman to chuse me for his own service : accordingly I was detained in his seraglio, while the other captives were led into a publick place, and sold according to custom. What Mehemet had foretold to me in the vessel, came to pass.—My condition was very happy ; far from being abandoned to jailers, or employed in laborious work, I was, by order of Solyman, disposed of in a particular place, with five or six slaves of quality, who expected every moment to be redeemed, and whose tasks were far from being painful. My business was to water the orange-trees and flowers in the garden, and I could not have been favoured with a more agreeable occupation.

Solyman was a man about forty years of age, well shaped, very polite, and, for a Turk, mighty gallant. His chief favourite was a Cachemirian * woman, who, by her understanding and beauty, had acquired an absolute dominion over him.—He loved her even to adoration, and treated her every day with some entertainment or other ; sometimes with a concert of vocal and instrumental musick ; and sometimes with a comedy in the Turkish taste ; that is to say, a dramattick poem, in which modesty and decorum were as little

* Cachemire is a country under the dominion of the Great Mogul, called the Indian Paradise ; remarkable for the beauty and wit of its women.

regarded as the rules of Aristotle. The favourite, whose name was Farrukhnaz, was passionately fond of these diversions, and even made her women sometimes represent Arabian pieces before the Dey; wherein she herself played a part, and charmed all the spectators by the grace and vivacity of her action. I being one day, among the musicians, at a representation of this kind, Solyman ordered me to play upon the guitarre, and sing alone between the acts. I had the good fortune to please, was very much applauded, and the favourite seemed to look upon me with a favourable eye.

The very next day, while I was busied in watering the orange-trees in the garden, an eunuch passing by me, without stopping or speaking one word, dropt a billet at my feet: I took it up in a confusion made up of fear and joy.—I lay down upon the ground, that I might not be seen from the windows of the seraglio; and concealing myself behind the boxes in which the orange-trees were planted, opened the letter, in which I found a pretty valuable diamond, and these words in good Castilian:

“**Y**OUNG Christian, thank heaven for thy captivity.—Love and fortune will make thee happy: love, if thou art sensible to the charms of a beautiful woman; and fortune, if thou hast courage to despise the greatest danger.”

I did

I did not in the least doubt that the letter came from the favourite Sultana : the stile and diamond persuaded me, that she must have been the author. Besides that I am not naturally very timorous, the vanity of being in the good graces of a Grand Signior's mistress, and, more than that, the hope of getting from her four times as much money as would be necessary for my ransom, made me form the design of atchieving that adventure, whatever dangers might attend it. I continued my work, musing upon the means of entering the apartment of Farrukhnaz, or rather expecting that she would pave the way ; for I concluded that she would not stop there, but at least be at more than half the trouble. I was not mistaken : the same eunuch, that passed me before, repassed an hour after, and said, " Christian, hast thou considered ; and wilt thou have the boldness to follow me ?"—I answered, " Yes." He replied, " Very well : heaven preserve thee.—Thou shalt see me again to-morrow morning." So saying, he retired.—Next day he appeared accordingly, about eight in the morning, and beckoned me to him. I obeyed the signal, and he conducted me into a hall, where there was a large piece of linen, which another eunuch and he had brought thither, and which they were to carry to the Sultana, for the decoration of an Arabian piece, that she was preparing for the entertainment of the Dey.

The two eunuchs, having spread out the cloth, laid me along within it, and, at the hazard of my being suffocated, rolled it up again with me in the middle : then, each taking one end of it, carried me thus, unquestioned, into the bed-chamber of the fair Cachimirian, who had nobody with her but an old slave, devoted to her pleasure. When the two unrolled the cloth, Farrukhnaz, at sight of me, broke out into transports of joy, that well discovered the genius of women in that country.—Bold as I naturally was, I could not see myself transported, all of a sudden, into the secret apartment of the women, without being seized with fear. The lady easily perceived it, and in order to dissipate my apprehension, said, “ Young man, fear nothing : Solyman is gone to his country-house, where he will remain all day ; so that we may converse together freely.”

Encouraged by these words, I assumed a look that redoubled the favourite's joy. “ I am pleased with your person, (said she) and intend to soften the rigour of your slavery : I believe you worthy of the sentiments I have conceived for you ; for tho' you are in the dress of a slave, you have a noble and gallant air, that shews you are not of the vulgar. Speak freely, and tell me who you are.—I know that captives of a noble birth disguise their rank, that they may be redeemed at an easier rate ; but you have no occasion to behave in that manner with me : I should even

be affronted at such a precaution, since I promise to set you at liberty.—Be sincere, therefore, and confess that you are a young man of a good family.” “ Truly, madam, (I replied) it would be ingratitude in me to repay your generosity with dissimulation; and since you absolutely charge me to reveal my quality, you must be satisfied. I am the son of a Spanish grandee.”—Perhaps I spoke truth: at least the Sultana believed it; and, pleased that she had thrown her eyes upon a gentleman of importance, assured me that it should not be her fault, if we did not see one another often in private.—We had a pretty long conversation, and I never saw a more engaging woman: she understood several languages, especially the Castilian, which she spoke pretty well. When she judged it time for us to part, I went, by her order, into an ozier basket, covered with a flowered silk, the work of her own hand. Then the two slaves, who brought me in, were called, and carried me out as a present from the favourite to the Dey: a thing sacred from all the men who are intrusted with the guard of the women.

Farrukhnaz and I found other means of seeing one another; and that amiable captive inspired me with almost as much love for her, as she had for me. Our intelligence remained secret during two months; although it is very difficult in a seraglio, to conceal the mysteries of love so long from the Argus's that watch it. But an unlucky accident discom-

certed our small affairs, and my fortune was entirely changed. One day, when I had been introduced to the Sultana in the body of an artificial dragon, that was made for a show, and was conversing with her, Solyman, who, I imagined, was busy in the country, interrupted us, and entered so hastily into the apartment of his favourite, that the old slave scarce had time to advertise us of his arrival; consequently, I had no leisure to conceal myself, and therefore was the first object that presented itself to the view of the Dey.

He seemed astonished at the sight of me, and his eyes kindled with fury. I looked upon myself as one that touched his last moment, and already imagined myself under the torture. As for Fattukhaaz, I perceived that she was terrified indeed; but instead of owning her crime and asking pardon, she said to Solyman, "Signior, before you pronounce my sentence, deign to hear my defence: appearances, doubtless, condemn me, and I seem to have committed a piece of treason worthy of the most horrible chastisement. I have brought this young captive hither, and in order to introduce him into my apartment, have used the same artifice which I would have employed, if I had entertained a violent passion for him. Nevertheless, I take our holy prophet to witness, that notwithstanding this conduct, I am not unfaithful. I had a mind to converse with this christian slave, in order to detach him from his sect, and engage him to

follow that of the believers. I have found in him such a resistance as I expected ; but however, I have conquered his prejudice, and he has promised to embrace Mahometanism."

I own, I ought to have contradicted the favourite, without any regard to the dangerous conjuncture in which I was : but being in the utmost dejection of spirit, affected with the danger in which I saw a woman whom I loved, and trembling for myself, I remained speechless and confused : I could not utter one word, and the Dey, persuaded by my silence that his mistress said nothing but the truth, was appeased. "Madam, (said he) I am willing to believe that you have not injured me, and that a desire of doing a thing agreeable to the prophet, has engaged you to hazard such a delicate action. I forgive your imprudence, therefore, provided that this captive takes the turban immediately." He sent for a Marabout* that instant, I was cloathed with a Turkish dress, and did all that was required, without having power to resist. Or rather, I was ignorant of what I did, so much were my senses disordered. How many christians are there, who would have been as base as I was, on such an occasion !

After the ceremony, I quitted the seraglio, under the name of Sidy Hali, to exercise a small employment bestowed upon me by Solymán. I never saw the Sultana again ; but one of her eunuchs coming to me one day,

* Marabouts are Mahometan priests.

brought from her a present of jewels worth two thousand sultanins of gold, with a billet, in which the lady assured me, that she would never forget my generous complaisance, in suffering myself to be made a Mahometan, in order to save her life. Truly, besides the presents I received from Farrukhnaz, I obtained, through her canal, an employment more considerable than the first, and in less than seven years, became one of the richest renegadoes in the city of Algier.

You may well believe, that if I assisted at the prayers which the mussulmen put up in their mosques, and fulfilled the other duties of their religion, it was only out of pure grimace. I preserved a determined resolution to re-enter into the bosom of the church; and for that purpose, to withdraw one day, into Spain or Italy, with the riches which I should amass. In the mean time, I lived very agreeably; was lodged in a fine house, had superb gardens, a great number of slaves, and very handsome women in my seraglio. Though the use of wine is forbid in that country to Mahometans, they don't fail, for the most part, to drink it in private. As for my own part, I drank it without ceremony, as almost all renegadoes do. I remember I had two companions with whom I often committed a debauch within the night. One was a Jew, the other an Arabian, and both, as I imagined, honest men; so that I lived with them in the greatest familiarity. One evening, I

invited them to supper, and a dog, of which I was passionately fond, having died that day, we bathed his body, and buried it with all the ceremony that is observed at the funerals of the Mahometans. In so doing, we had no intention to ridicule the mussulman religion; but only to amuse ourselves, and gratify a foolish whim that seized us in the middle of our debauch, to render the last duties to my dog.

This action, however, had well nigh ruined me. Next day, a man came to my house, and said, " Signior Sidy Hali, I am come hither on an important affair. The Cady * wants to speak with you; take the trouble, if you please, to go to his house immediately: an Arabian merchant who supped with you last night, has informed him of a certain impiety committed by you, with regard to a dog which you buried. For this reason I summon you to appear this day before that judge, otherwise I give you notice that you will be proceeded against in a criminal manner." So saying, he went away, leaving me thunderstruck with this citation. The Arabian had no cause to complain of me, and I could not comprehend the traitor's reason for playing me this trick. Nevertheless, the thing was not to be neglected. I knew the Cady was a man severe in appearance, but not at all scrupulous at bottom: so I put two hundred sultanins of gold in my purse, and re-

* The Cady is the civil magistrate in every town in Turkey.

paired to his house. He carried me into his closet, and said, with a stern look, "You are an impious, sacrilegious, and abominable man: you have interred a dog like a muffled man: what horrid profanation! Is it thus then you regard our most sacred ceremonies? and did you become a Mahometan, only to make a jest of our worship?" "Mr. Cady, (I replied) the Arabian who has made such a malicious report of me, that false friend, is an accomplice of my crime, if it be a crime to grant the honours of burial to a faithful domestic—an animal that possessed a thousand good qualities. He loved people of merit and distinction so much, that even in his last moments, as a testimony of his friendship, he has left them his whole fortune by a will, of which I am the sole executor. He bequeaths twenty crowns to one, thirty to another, and, Sir, he has not forgot you, (added I, taking out my purse) here are two hundred sultanins of gold which he charged me to give you." The Cady losing his gravity at this discourse, could not help laughing, and as we were alone, took the purse without ceremony, saying, while he dismissed me, "Go, Signior Sidy Hali, you have done well, to inter with pomp and honour a dog who had so much consideration for persons of worth."

By these means I extricated myself out of this affair, which if it did not make me more wise, rendered me at least more circumspect for the future. I no longer drank with the Arabian,



Arabian, nor even with the Jew; but chose for a companion at my cups, a young gentleman of Leghorn called Azarini, who was my own slave. I was not like the rest of the renegadoes, who are more cruel to christian slaves than the Turks themselves; all my captives waited very patiently for their redemption; and indeed I treated them so gently, that sometimes they told me, they were more afraid of changing their master, than desirous of liberty, whatever charms it has for people in a state of bondage.

One day, the Dey's vessels returned with considerable prizes, bringing in more than an hundred slaves of both sexes, whom they had taken on the coasts of Spain. Solyman kept but a very small number, and the rest were exposed to sale: I arrived in the market-place, and bought a Spanish girl about ten or twelve years old, who wept bitterly and seemed in despair. I was surprised to see one of her age so sensible of captivity; and bid her, in Castilian, moderate her affliction, assuring her that she had fallen into the hands of a master who did not want humanity, though he wore a turban. The young creature, whose mind was still engrossed by her sorrow, did not hear what I said: she did nothing but sob, complain of her fate, and from time to time, cry with a piteous accent, "O my mother! why are we separated? I should have patience were we together." In pronouncing these words, she turned her eyes towards a woman between
forty

forty and fifty years of age, who stood a few paces from her, and with a downcast look, waited in sullen silence, until somebody should purchase her. I asked the young girl, if the person she looked at was her mother. "Yes, alas! Signior, (she replied) in the name of God, do not part us." "Well, my child, (said I) if it is necessary for your consolation that you should be together, you shall soon be satisfied." At the same time, I approached the mother, in order to bid for her: but I no sooner beheld her face, than I recollected, with all the emotion you can imagine, the features, the individual countenance of Lucinda! "Just heaven! (said I to myself) 'tis my own mother! 'tis, doubtless, she herself!" As for her, whether the deep affliction occasioned by her misfortunes, made all the objects that surrounded her appear to her as enemies; or that my dress disguised me; or rather, that I was much altered in twelve years, during which she had not seen me, I know not, but she did not at all remember me.

Having bought her also, I carried them both to my house, where designing to give them the pleasure of knowing who I was, "Madam, (said I to Lucinda) is it possible that my features do not strike you? Have my whiskers and turban disguised me so much, that you do not know your son Raphael!" My mother, starting at these words, considered my countenance, recollected me, and we embraced one another with great tenderness.

I then

I then embraced her daughter, who perhaps knew no more of having a brother, than I of having a sister. "Confess (said I to my mother) that in all your theatrical pieces, you have not a recognition so original as this."

"Son, (answered she sighing) I was at first rejoiced to see you again, but now my joy is converted into grief! In what a situation, alas! do I find you! My slavery gives me a thousand times less pain than that odious dress."

"In good faith! madam, (said I, interrupting her with a laugh) I admire your delicacy, which to be sure is very commendable in an actress: why, good God! mother, you must be greatly altered, if my metamorphosis offends you so much: instead of finding fault with my turban, look upon me rather as an actor who plays the part of a Turk upon the stage: though I am a renegado, I am no more a Mussulman now, than when I was in Spain; and at bottom I feel myself still attached to my religion: when you shall know the adventures that have happened to me in this country, you will excuse my conduct. Love was my crime; and I sacrifice to that deity: I am somewhat of your disposition, I assure you. There is still another reason, (added I) which ought to moderate your displeasure in seeing me thus situated. You expected to suffer in Algier a rigorous captivity; and you find in your master a son, tender, respectful, and rich enough to maintain you here in abundance, until we can lay hold of

an occasion of returning certainly into Spain. So that you must allow that proverb to be true, which says, "It is an ill wind that blows no body good."

"Son, (said Lucinda to me) since you design to repass one day into your own country, and there abjure the religion of Mahomet, I am comforted. Thank heaven! (continued she) that I shall be able to carry back your sister Beatrice, safe and sound, into Castile."

"Yes, Madam, (cried I) you shall have it in your power: we will go all three together as soon as possible, and rejoin the rest of our family; for I suppose you have more marks of your fruitfulness in Spain."—"No, (said my mother) I have no other children than you two, and you must know that Beatrice is the fruit of lawful wedlock."—"Why (I resumed) did you give my little sister that advantage over me? How could you resolve to marry? I have heard you say an hundred times, during my childhood, that you could not forgive an handsome woman for taking an husband."—"Every season has its reason, my son, (she replied) men of the most firm resolution are apt to change; and would you have a woman be more constant! I will (added she) recount my history after you left Madrid." Then she made the following narration, which (as it is curious) I will favour you with.

"If you remember it, (said my mother) you quitted young Leganez about thirty years

ago : at that time the duke of Medina Celi told me, that he would come and sup with me in private one evening : he appointed the day, when I waited for that nobleman, who came accordingly, and I had the good fortune to please him. He demanded the sacrifice of all the rivals he might have : I granted his request, in hopes of being well paid for my condescension : and my hopes were not disappointed : for, the very next day, I received from him considerable presents, which were followed by many more, during the course of our correspondence. I was afraid that I should not be able to detain a man of such high rank a long time in my fetters ; and this I dreaded the more, because I knew very well, that he had escaped from celebrated beauties, whose chains he had broke almost as soon as he had bore them. Nevertheless, far from being every day less and less pleased with my favours, his raptures seemed rather to increase : in short, I had the art to amuse him, and hinder his heart, naturally inconstant, from giving way to its usual levity.

He had been attached to me already three months, and I had room to flatter myself, that his passion would be of long duration ; when one of my she-friends and I went to an assembly, where he happened to be with his dutchess, in order to hear a concert of vocal and instrumental music. We chanced to place ourselves pretty near the dutchess, who was pleased to take it amiss, that I should presume to appear

appear in a place where she was, and sent a message to me, by one of her women, desiring that I would immediately withdraw. I returned an insolent answer, which incensed the dutchess so much, that she complained of it to her husband, who came to me in person, and said, "Retire, Lucinda; though noblemen of my rank attach themselves to such little creatures as you, they must not forget themselves altogether: if we love you more than our wives, we honour our wives more than you; and as often as you have the insolence to put yourselves in competition with them, you will always have the mortification to be treated with indignity."

Luckily for me, the duke spoke this in a tone of voice so low, that not one word was overheard by the people around us. I withdrew, covered with shame, and wept with vexation, for the affront I had received. To crown my confusion, the actors and actresses got notice of the adventure that very evening: one would think these people entertain a dæmon, who delights in reporting to one whatever happens to another. If an actor, for example, is guilty of some extravagant action in a debauch, or an actress enters into articles with a rich gallant, the company is immediately informed of the circumstance. All my comrades, therefore, knew what happened at the concert, and God knows how they rejoiced at my expence. A spirit of charity, which reigns among them, usually manifests

nifests itself on these occasions. I put myself, however, above their tittle-tattle, and consoled myself for the loss of the duke de Medina Celi; for he visited me no more, and I learned a few days after, that a Carthusian nun had made a conquest of him.

When a lady belonging to the theatre has the good fortune to be in vogue, she cannot want lovers; and the passion of a grandee, though it does not last above three days, greatly enhances her price. I found myself besieged with adorers, as soon as it was known in Madrid that the duke had forsaken me. Those rivals whom I had sacrificed to him, more captivated by my charms than ever, returned in crowds, as candidates for my favour; I received homage from a thousand other hearts, and was never so much in fashion before. Of all the men who courted my graces, a fat German, gentleman to the duke d'Osuna, seemed the most eager. He had not a very amiable person, but attracted my attention by a thousand pistoles, which he had amassed in the service of his master, and which he squandered away, in order to be deemed worthy of being in the list of my happy gallants. As long as this worthy admirer, whose name was Brutandorf, had money to spend, I gave him a favourable reception; but when he was ruined, he found my door always shut against him. This proceeding of mine displeased him, and he came to search for me at the theatre, during the play. He found me
behind

behind the scenes, and began to reproach me for my ingratitude. I laughed in his face, at which he was enraged, and lent me a box on the ear, like a blunt German as he was : I shrieked aloud, interrupted the representation, appeared upon the stage, and addressing myself to the Duke d'Offuna, who was present with the dutchess his lady, demanded justice for the German behaviour of his gentleman. The duke ordered us to go on with the play, and said he would hear the parties, when we had finished the piece. As soon as it was over, I presented myself, in a good deal of emotion, before the duke, and signified my grievance in a pathetic manner ; as for the German, he employed but two words in his defence ; he said, " that far from repenting of what he had done, he would do it again, on the same provocation." Both parties being heard, the Duke of Offuna said to my adversary, " Brutandorf, I dismiss you from my service ; let me never see your face again : not that I mind your having struck an actress, but am offended at your want of respect to your master and mistress, by presuming to disturb the entertainment in their presence."

This sentence I could not digest : I was mortally piqued, because the German had not been turned away on account of his insolence to me : I imagined that such an affront put upon an actress, ought to have been as severely punished as petty treason, and I had laid my account with seeing the gentleman under-

go some terrible infliction. This disagreeable event undeceived and convinced me, that the world always makes a distinction between the players and the characters they represent. I was, for this reason, disgusted with the stage, which I resolved to abandon, and go to live at a great distance from Madrid. I accordingly chose the city of Valencia for the place of my retreat, and thither I repaired incognito, with the value of twenty thousand ducats, in jewels and cash: a fortune, as I thought, sufficient to maintain me during the rest of my days; since I designed to lead a very retired life. I took a small house at Valencia, and had no other domestics than a maid-servant and a page, to whom I was as little known as to the whole city. I pretended to be a widow of an officer of the king's household; and said I came to settle at Valencia, because it had the reputation of being one of the most agreeable places in Spain. I saw but very little company, and observed such a regular conduct, that I was never suspected of having been an actress. In spite of my care, however, to keep myself concealed, I attracted the notice of a gentleman, who had a country-house near Paterna. He was a very well-made cavalier, between thirty-five and forty years of age, but withal, a nobleman very much in debt; which is no great rarity in the kingdom of Valencia, more than in other countries.

This Signior Hidalgo *, finding my person to his liking, wanted to know if I could answer his purpose in other respects: for this end, he uncoupled his spies to make discoveries, and had the pleasure to learn from their report, that, besides some share of beauty, I was a widow of good fortune. He looked upon me, therefore, as a suitable match, and, in a little time, an honest old gentlewoman came to my house, and told me, from him, that being equally charmed with my beauty and virtue, he made a tender of his heart, and was ready to conduct me to the altar, as soon as I would favour him with my hand. I asked three days to deliberate upon his proposal, and inform myself of his character; which was so engaging, that, although I was not ignorant of his situation, I easily determined to marry him in a short time after.

Don Manuel de Xercia (so was my husband called) carried me immediately to his castle, that had a very antique air, of which he was not a little vain. He pretended that one of his ancestors had caused it to be built; and from thence concluded, that there was not a more antient house in Spain than that of Xercia. But this title of nobility, fair as it was, had like to have been destroyed by time; for the castle, which they were obliged to prop up in several parts, threatened immediate ruin. How happy, therefore, was Don Manuel in marry-

* Hidalgo (in Spanish) is a gentleman, literally somebody's son, in contradistinction to those who are the sons of nobody.

ing me ! more than half of my money was employed in reparations ; and the rest served to put us in a condition of making a figure in the country. Behold me then (to use the expression) in a new world, changed into the nymph of a castle, and lady of a parish. Here was a metamorphosis ! and I was too good an actress, not to support, with dignity, the splendor with which I was invested by my rank. I assumed lofty theatrical airs, which made the village conceive an high idea of my birth. How merry would they have been at my expence, had they known the truth of the matter ! the nobility in the neighbourhood would have bestowed upon me a thousand taunts, and the peasants abated a great deal of the respect they shewed.

I had lived happily near six years with Don Manuel, when he died, leaving my affairs in great perplexity, with your sister Beatrice, then going in her fifth year. The castle, which was all the estate we had, was unluckily engaged to several creditors, the chief of whom was one Bernard Astuto *, whose name seemed very well adapted to his character : he practised at Valencia the business of an attorney, which he exercised with consummate skill, having studied the law in order to qualify himself for cheating with the greater dexterity. What a terrible creditor he was ! a castle under the claws of such an attorney, is like a pigeon in the talons of a kite. Accordingly,

* Astuto is a Spanish word, signifying craft or cunning.

Signior Astuto, as soon as he understood the death of my husband, did not fail to besiege the castle, which he would undoubtedly have blown up, by the mines that chicanery began to prepare; had not my good genius interposed, and ordered it so, as that my besieger became my slave. I had the good fortune to captivate him, during an interview we had on the subject of the law-suit. I spared nothing, I own, to inspire him with a passion for me: the desire of saving my land, made me practise upon him all those languishing airs which had often succeeded so well. Notwithstanding all my art, I was afraid of being baffled by the attorney, who was so ingulphed in business, that he did not seem susceptible of an amorous impression. Nevertheless, this fullen, aukward scrawler took more pleasure in looking at me, than I imagined. "Madam, (said he) I know not how to make love: I have always applied to my profession so closely, as to neglect the methods and customs of gallantry; but, however, I am not ignorant of the essential part; and, therefore, to come to the point, I assure you, that if you will give me your hand, we will burn the whole proceedings; I will bubble the other creditors, who join in the suit against you: you shall enjoy the life-rent, and your daughter the property of the land." My own interest, and that of Beatrice, did not permit me to hesitate; I accepted the proposal, and the attorney kept his promise. He turned his

arms

arms against the rest of the creditors, and secured me in the possession of my castle ; and this, perhaps, was the first time of his having befriended the widow and the orphan.

I became, therefore, an attorney's wife, without ceasing to be lady of the parish. But this new marriage cost me the esteem of the gentry in Valencia. The women of fashion looked upon me as one who had degenerated, and therefore would not visit me ; so that I was obliged to confine myself to an acquaintance among citizens : a circumstance that gave me some uneasiness at first ; because I had been for six years accustomed to correspond with none but ladies of distinction : but I soon consoled myself, and became acquainted with the wives of a scrivener and two attorneys, whose characters were pleasant enough ; there was something ridiculous in their behaviour, that diverted me very much. These small gentry believed themselves ladies of some consideration. " Alas ! (said I, sometimes, to myself, when I saw them forget themselves) this is the way of the world : every one thinks herself better than her neighbour. I imagined, that actresses were the only people that did not know themselves ; but I find that citizens wives are not a whit more reasonable. I wish that, by way of punishment, they were obliged to keep in their houses the pictures of their grandfathers : in good faith they would not place them in the most remarkable apartment."

After having been married four years, Signior Bernardo Astuto fell sick, and died without children; so that, with what he had settled upon me at our marriage, and the money I was left in possession of, I found myself a rich widow, and had the reputation of being so. On this report, a Sicilian gentleman, whose name was Colifichini, resolved to attach himself to me, in order to ruin or espouse me, for he left me the choice. He had come from Palermo to see Spain, and after having satisfied his curiosity, waited (as he said) at Valencia, for an opportunity of repassing into Sicily. This gentleman was not more than five and twenty years of age, genteely shaped, though small; in short, I liked his appearance. He found means to speak with me in private, and I will frankly own, that I became madly fond of him, in our first interview. On his side, the little rogue seemed quite captivated by my charms; and I believe (God forgive me) we should have married one another immediately, had the attorney's death, which was still recent, permitted me to contract a new engagement so soon: but ever since I had fallen into the taste of matrimony, I maintained the punctilios of decorum.

We agreed, therefore, to defer our marriage for some time, out of decency: in the mean time, Colifichini continued his addresses, and his passion, far from abating, seemed to increase daily. The poor young man was not
very

very well provided with cash; I perceived it, and he no longer wanted money: for, besides that I was almost twice his age, I remembered that I had laid the men under contribution, in my youth, and I looked upon what I now did, as a restitution that acquitted my conscience. We waited, as patiently as we could, for the expiration of the time prescribed by custom, for women to remain in a state of widowhood; and then, went to the altar, where we mutually bound ourselves in the indissoluble ties of wedlock: we afterwards retired to my castle, where, I may say, we lived two years, not so much like husband and wife, as two tender lovers. But, alas! we were not destined to be long happy in one another, a fatal pleurisy robbed me of my dear Colifichini."

Here I interrupted my mother, crying, "How! Madam, your third husband dead too! you must certainly be a very dangerous tenement." "What could I do, son? (answered Lucinda) was it in my power to prolong the days that heaven had numbered? if I have lost three husbands, I could not help it. Two of them I regretted very much: he for whom I had the least regard was the attorney; as I married him out of interest, I easily consoled myself for his death. But (added she) to return to Colifichini, I must tell you, that a few months after his decease, having a mind to go and see, with my own eyes, a country-house near Palermo, which he had

assigned to me as a jointure, in our contract of marriage, I embarked with my daughter, for Sicily ; but we were taken in our passage, by the vessels of the Dey of Algier, and conducted into this city. Happily for us you chanced to be on the spot, where we were put up to sale, otherwise we might have fallen into the hands of some barbarous master, who would have maltreated us, and under whom we might have passed our whole life in bondage, without your knowing any thing of the matter."

Such was my mother's narration ; after which, gentlemen, I gave her the best apartment of my house, with the liberty of living as she should think proper ; a permission that she relished very much. She had contracted such a habit of being in love, from the repeated attacks of that passion, that she must absolutely have either an husband or a gallant. At first she cast her eyes on some of my slaves ; but Haly Pegelin, a Greek renegado, who came frequently to the house, soon engrossed her attention. She conceived a more violent passion for him, than ever she felt for Colifichini, and she was so much mistress of the art of pleasing, that she found the secret of charming him also. I winked at their intelligence, and thought of nothing then but my return into Spain. The Dey having already permitted me to fit out a vessel, to cruize and commit piracy, I was busied in making preparations ; and eight days before they were finished,

finished, said to Lucinda, "Madam, we shall depart from Algier, in a very little time, and lose sight of that place which you detest so much."

My mother grew pale at these words, and remained speechless. At which being strangely surprized; "What do I see, Madam! (said I) what is the meaning of that consternation in your looks? you seem to be afflicted, rather than rejoiced at what I tell you! I thought I should have made you happy with the news of every thing's being ready for our departure. Have you no longer any desire then, of repassing into Spain?" "None at all, son, (answered my mother) I have had so much affliction in that kingdom, that I renounce it for ever." "What do I hear! (cried I, in a transport of grief) ah! say rather that love detaches you from it. O heavens! what a change is here! when you arrived in this city, every object that presented itself was odious to your eyes: but Haly Pegelin has altered your disposition." "I don't deny it, (replied Lucinda) I love that renegade, whom I design to take for my fourth husband." "What an abandoned project! (said I, interrupting her, with horror) would you marry a mussulman? you forget that you are a christian; or rather, you never was one but in name. Ah! mother, what are you about to do? you have resolved upon your own perdition, by voluntarily embracing that which I was compelled to by necessity."

I used many more arguments to dissuade her from her design ; but I harangued to no purpose : she had formed her resolution ; and not contented with following her own wicked inclination, and quitting me to live with that renegade, she wanted to carry Beatrice along with her also : but this I opposed. “ Ah, wretched Lucinda ! (said I to her) if nothing is able to restrain you, at least abandon yourself only, to the fury that possesses your imagination ; don’t drag a young innocent creature to the precipice from whence you intend to throw yourself.” Lucinda went away, without making any reply, and I believed that a remaining ray of reason enlightened and hindered her from being obstinate in demanding her daughter. But how little was I acquainted with my mother ! two days after, one of my slaves said to me, “ Signior, take care of yourself ; one of Pegelin’s captives has imparted a thing to me, of which you cannot take the advantage too soon. Your mother has changed her religion, and to punish you, for having refused to let her carry off Beatrice, is resolved to inform the Dey of your intended flight.” I did not doubt one moment, that Lucinda was capable of doing what my slave mentioned : I had opportunities of studying the lady, and perceived, that, by the habit of acting sanguinary parts in tragedies, she was so familiarized to guilt, that she could have caused me to be burnt alive, and, I believe, would have been no more affected with

with my death, than with the catastrophe of a dramatic performance.

Willing therefore not to neglect the advice of my slave, I hastened my embarkation, hired Turks, according to the custom of the corsairs of Algier, when they go on a cruize; but I hired no more than such as were necessary to keep me unsuspected, and set sail as soon as possible, with all my slaves, and my sister Beatrice. You may well believe, that I did not forget to carry off, at the same time, all my jewels and money, which might amount to the value of six thousand ducats. When we got to sea, we began by securing the Turks, whom we easily chained, because my slaves were more numerous than they: and we had such a favourable wind, that in a little time we made the coast of Italy, and arrived, without the least bad accident, in the harbour of Leghorn, where, I believe, the whole city crowded to see us come ashore. The father of my slave Azarini being among the spectators, by accident or curiosity, surveyed all the captives with great attention, as they disembarked; but though he sought among them the features of his son, he little expected to see him again. What transports and embraces were the consequence of their meeting, when they recollected one another!

As soon as Azarini had told his father who I was, and what brought me to Leghorn, the old man obliged me as well as Beatrice to lodge at his house. I shall pass over in silence the detail

of a thousand things that I was obliged to perform, in being re-admitted into the bosom of the church ; and only observe, that I abjured Mahometism much more heartily than I had embraced it. After having entirely purged myself of the gall of Algier, I sold my vessel, and set all my slaves at liberty ; as for the Turks, they were detained in prison at Leghorn, in order to be exchanged for Christians. I received the best of treatment from both the Azarinis, the younger of whom married my sister Beatrice, who was indeed no bad match for him, being a gentleman's daughter, and heiress of the castle of Xercia, which my mother had taken care to farm out to a rich peasant of Paterna, when she resolved upon her passage into Sicily.

Having staid some time at Leghorn, I set out for Florence, which I longed much to see ; and whither I did not go without letters of recommendation. Azarini the father had friends at the grand duke's court, to whom he introduced me as a Spanish gentleman his ally ; and I prefixed Don to my name, imitating in that a great many Spanish plebeians, who, when they are out of their own country, assume that title of honour without ceremony. I boldly, therefore, called myself Don Raphael ; and as I had brought from Algier a sufficiency to support my dignity, appeared at court in a splendid manner. The gentleman to whom Azarini had wrote in my favour, gave out that I was a person of quality ;

so that his testimony, together with the airs I assumed, made me easily pass for a man of importance. I soon got acquainted with the principal noblemen, who presented me to the grand duke, whom I had the good fortune to please : upon which, I bent my whole endeavour to make my court to that prince, and study his disposition. I listened attentively to what the oldest courtiers said to him ; and by their discourse discovered his inclinations. Among other things, I observed that he loved raillery, good stories, and fallies of wit. I modelled myself accordingly ; and every morning marked in my pocket-book the stories I designed for the day. I had such a number of them in my memory, that my budget might be said to have been full ; and yet, in spite of all my management, it was emptied apace in such a manner, that I should either have been obliged to use repetition, or shew that I was at the end of my apothegms ; if my genius, fruitful in fiction, had not furnished me with abundance. But I composed tales of gallantry and humour, that were very entertaining to the great duke ; and, as it often happens with professed wits, in the morning I invented bright expressions, which I uttered as unpremeditated fallies in the afternoon.

I even elevated myself into a poet, and consecrated my muse to the praise of the prince. I freely own indeed, that my verse was none of the best, therefore not much criticised : but had it been better, I question if it would have

been better received by the grand duke, who seemed very well satisfied with my talents; the matter, perhaps, hindered him from finding fault. Be that as it will, this prince insensibly took such a liking to me, as gave umbrage to the courtiers. They endeavoured to discover who I was, but did not succeed. Getting notice, however, that I had been a renegade, they did not fail to inform the prince of it, in hopes of injuring my character. But this they could not accomplish; on the contrary, the great duke, one day, obliged me to give him a faithful narration of my voyage to Algier; I obeyed, and my adventures, which I did not at all disguise, afforded him infinite pleasure.

“ Don Raphael, (said he, when I had finished the relation) I have a regard for you, and will give you a mark of it, which will not permit you to doubt of my friendship. I will make you the depository of my secrets; and to begin with an instance of my confidence, I must tell you that I am in love with the wife of one of my ministers. She is the most amiable lady of my court, but, at the same time, the most virtuous: shut up amidst her family, and solely attached to a husband whom she adores, she seems ignorant of the noise her charms make in Florence. Judge you if this must not be a difficult conquest. Nevertheless, this beauty, inaccessible as she is to lovers, has deigned, sometimes, to hear my sighs: I have found means to speak to her

in private, and acquaint her with the sentiments of my heart ; but I don't flatter myself with the hope of having inspired her with mutual love : she has never given me cause to form such an agreeable idea : I don't, however, despair of pleasing her by my assiduity, and the mysterious conduct I shall take care to observe.

My passion for that lady (added he) is known to nobody but herself : for, instead of consulting my inclination without constraint, and acting the sovereign, I conceal the knowledge of my flame from all the world. A piece of delicacy which I think I owe to Mascarini, the husband of her I love : his zeal, attachment, services, and probity, oblige me to conduct myself with great secrecy and circumspection. I would not plunge a dagger into the bosom of that unhappy husband, by declaring myself the lover of his wife ; but wish that he may always remain ignorant if possible, of the flame that consumes me, for I am persuaded that he would die of grief, if he knew the confidence I now repose in you. I conceal my steps, therefore, and am resolved to make use of you, in expressing to Lucretia all the pangs I suffer, by the constraint which she imposes upon me : you shall be the interpreter of my sentiments, and I don't at all doubt that you will acquit yourself of the commission to a miracle. Contract an acquaintance with Mascarini, endeavour to gain his friendship, insinuate yourself into his house,

and procure the liberty of conversing with his wife. This is what I expect of you, and what I assure myself, you will perform with all the discretion and address that such a delicate employment requires."

I promised to do all that lay in my power, to justify the confidence he honoured me with, and contribute to the success of his flame: and soon kept my word with him; I spared nothing to please Mascarini, and accomplished my end with ease. Charmed to find his friendship courted by a man who was beloved of his prince, he met my advances half-way: his house was open to me: I had free access to his lady, and, I dare say, behaved myself so well, that he had not the least suspicion of the negotiation entrusted to my care. 'Tis true, indeed, for an Italian, he was not much addicted to jealousy; he depended upon the virtue of Lucretia, and shutting himself up in his closet, left me frequently alone with her. I went roundly to work, the very first opportunity; entertained the lady with the passion of the grand duke, and told her, that my sole design in coming to her house, was to talk to her of that prince. She did not seem captivated by him; and yet, I perceived that her vanity hindered her from rejecting his addresses: she took pleasure in hearing them, without feeling any inclination to answer his desires. She did not want understanding: but she was a woman, and I observed that her virtue yielded insensibly to the superb idea of

a sovereign in her chains. In short, the prince had reason to flatter himself, that without employing the violence of a Tarquin, he would see Lucretia subjected to his love. An accident, however, which he little expected, destroyed his hope, as you shall presently hear.

I am naturally impudent among women, having acquired that qualification, I know not whether it be good or bad, among the Turks : Lucretia was handsome, and I, forgetting that I was only to act the part of an ambassador, talked to her on my own score, offering my services with all the gallantry I was master of. Instead of being shocked at my audaciousness, and replying in a rage, she said, with a smile, " You must own, Don Raphael, that the grand duke has made choice of a very faithful and zealous minister, who serves him with an integrity never enough to be commended." " Madam, (said I, with the same air) don't let us examine things scrupulously ; but lay aside those reflections, which (I know very well) are not at all favourable to me. I abandon myself to my passion ; and after all, don't believe myself the first confident of a prince, who has betrayed his master in affairs of gallantry ; for the great have often dangerous rivals in their messengers of pleasure." " That may be, (replied Lucretia) but as for my part, I am so high-spirited, that nobody under the degree of a prince, shall ever make an impression upon my heart. Conduct yourself accordingly, (added she, growing serious)

and

and let us change the discourse. I am willing to forget what you have said, on condition that you shall never talk to me again in the same manner; otherwise you may chance to repent it."

Although this was an advice to the reader, of which I ought to have taken the advantage, I did not leave off entertaining Mascari's wife with my passion: I even pressed her with more ardour than ever, to make suitable returns to my tenderness, and was rash enough to take liberties. Upon which the lady, being affronted at my discourse and mussulman behaviour, checked me abruptly, threatened to make the grand duke acquainted with my insolence, and assured me, that she would desire him to punish me, as I deserved. I was piqued, in my turn, at these menaces; my love changed into hate; and determined to be revenged upon Lucretia, for her contempt, I went in quest of her husband, whom, after he had sworn that he would not expose me, I informed of the correspondence between his wife and the prince, not forgetting to paint her very amorous, in order to make the scene more interesting. The minister, to prevent all accidents, shut up his spouse, without any other form of process, in a secret apartment, where she was guarded by people on whom he could rely. While she was thus surrounded by spies, who hindered her from informing the grand duke of her situation, I told that prince, with a melancholy air, that he must

no more think of Lucretia; that Mascarin had; doubtless, discovered the whole affair, since he had taken it into his head to watch his wife; that I could not imagine what had alarmed his suspicion of me, for I thought, I had always behaved with a good deal of address; that the lady, perhaps, had confessed the whole to her husband, in concert with whom, she had allowed herself to be locked up, in order to avoid those importunities which alarmed her virtue. The prince seemed very much afflicted at my report; I was touched with his grief, and repented more than once of what I had done; but it was too late: besides, I confess that I felt a malicious joy, when I represented to myself the condition to which I had reduced the proud woman who had disdained my passion.

I enjoyed, with impunity, the pleasure of revenge, which is so sweet to all the world, and in particular to Spaniards, when the grand duke being one day in company with five or six of his courtiers and me, said, "In what manner do you think a man ought to be punished, who has dared to abuse the confidence of his prince, and attempted to deprive him of his mistress?" "He ought (said one) to be tied to the tails of four horses, and torn to pieces." Another was of opinion, that he should be mawled to death. The least cruel of those Italians, and he whose sentence was most favourable to the delinquent said, "That he would be satisfied with causing him to be
thrown

thrown from the top of a high tower." "And what is the opinion of Don Raphael? (resumed the grand duke) I am persuaded that the Spaniards are as severe as the Italians in such conjunctures."

I easily comprehended, as you may believe, that Mascariini had not kept his oath; or that his wife had found means to apprise the prince of what had passed between her and me; and my confusion appeared plain on my countenance. Nevertheless, disconcerted as I was, I answered, with a resolute tone, "Sir, the Spaniards are more generous: they would pardon the confident, on such an occasion, and, by their goodness, raise in his soul an eternal regret for having betrayed them."

"Well, (said the prince) I find myself capable of such generosity. I pardon the traitor: for I have none but myself to blame for having bestowed my confidence upon a man, whom I did not know, and whom I had reason to distrust, after what I had heard of his character. Don Raphael, (added he) this is the manner in which I will avenge myself: quit my dominions immediately, and let me never see your face again." I withdrew on the instant, not so much afflicted at my disgrace, as rejoiced at coming off so cheaply; and the very next day, embarked in a vessel that sailed from Leghorn, on its return to Barcelona."

I interrupted Don Raphael in this part of his history, by saying, "For a man of understanding, methinks you committed a great blunder

blunder in neglecting to leave Florence, immediately after the discovery you made to Mascarini, of the prince's passion for Lucretia; you should have concluded, that the grand duke would soon come to the knowledge of your infidelity." "I grant it, (replied the son of Lucinda) and notwithstanding the assurance which the minister gave me, of not exposing me to the resentment of the prince, I proposed to disappear in a very short time.

I arrived at Barcelona, (continued he) with the remainder of the wealth I had brought from Algier, the best part of which I had dissipated at Florence, in the character of the Spanish gentleman. I did not stay long in Catalonia: for, having a longing desire to revisit Madrid, the charming place of my nativity, I satisfied, as soon as possible, the desire that impelled me. When I arrived in that city, I took furnished lodgings, by accident, at a house where a lady lived, whose name was Camilla, and who, though no minor, was a very engaging creature. I take Signior Gil Blas to witness, who saw her, much about that time, at Valladolid. She had still more wit than beauty, and never had a she-adventurer better talents for decoying dupes: but she was none of those coquets, who lay up the acknowledgments of their gallants: when she had pillaged a man of business, she shared his spoils with the first sharper she found to her liking.

We loved one another at first sight; and the conformity of our manners joined us so closely, that we soon had every thing in common. Our fortunes, indeed, were not very considerable, and therefore we spent them in a very little time. Neither of us, unluckily, minded any thing but our pleasure, or made the least use of the talents we had, to live at our neighbour's expence. But misery, at last, awakened our geniuses, which pleasure had benumbed: and Camilla said to me, "My dear Raphael, let us make a diversion, my friend, and renounce a fidelity that ruins us both: you may captivate a rich widow, and I may charm some nobleman: for if we continue faithful to one another, here will be two fortunes lost." "Fair Camilla, (I replied) you have anticipated me; I was going to make the same proposal to you. I assent to your scheme, my queen: yes, for the better support of our mutual flame, let us attempt advantageous conquests: the infidelities we shall commit, will turn to triumphs in the end."

This convention being made, we took the field, and made considerable motions at first, without being able to encounter what we sought: Camilla could light upon none but beaux; that is to say, gallants who had not a penny in their pockets: and I could meet with no women, but such as loved better to levy contributions than to pay them. As our arts were useless in love, we had recourse to stratagems,

and performed so many, that our fame reached the ears of the corregidor ; and that severe judge for the devil, ordered one of his alguazils to apprehend us ; but this officer being as good-natured as the other was cruel, gave us time to quit Madrid, in consideration of a small sum which we bestowed upon him. We took the road to Valladolid, and fixed in that city, having hired a house, in which I lived with Camilla, who passed for my sister, to avoid scandal. At first, we kept our industry under the rein, and began to study the ground, before we should form any enterprize.

One day, a man accosting me in the street, saluted me very civilly, saying, " Signior Don Raphael, do you know me ?" I answered, " No." Upon which he resumed : " But I recollect you : I have seen you at the court of Tuscany, where I then belonged to the grand duke's guards. I quitted the service of that prince some months ago, and am come to Spain with an Italian of great finesse : we have been three weeks at Valladolid, and lodge with a Castilian and Galician, who are, without contradiction, two young fellows of honour. We live together by the work of our hands, make good cheer, and amuse ourselves like princes : if you will join us, you shall be agreeably received by my confederates : for you always seemed to me to be a gallant man, of a disposition not addicted to scruples, and a professed brother of our order."

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The rogue's frankness excited mine. "Since you speak to me with so little reserve, (said I to him) it is but reasonable that I should explain myself, in the same manner, to you. Indeed, I am not a novice in your profession; and if my modesty would allow me to recount my exploits, you would see that you have not judged too advantageously of my talents: but I will forbear to launch out in my own praise, and content myself with assuring you, while I accept that place in your company which is offered, that I will neglect nothing to approve myself worthy of your choice." As soon as I signified, to this ambidexter, my consent to augment the number of his comrades, he conducted me to the place where they were, and introduced me to their acquaintance. It was here that I saw, for the first time, the illustrious Ambrose de Lamela. Those gentlemen examined me touching my skill in the mystery of appropriating to one's self, with address, the effects of another. They wanted to know if I understood the principles of their art; but I shewed them a great many stratagems which they did not know, and which acquired their admiration of my ability. They were still more astonished, when, despising the dexterity of my hand, as a thing too common, I told them that I excelled in tricks, which required the assistance of genius. To convince them of this, I recounted the adventure of Jerome de Moyadas; and, upon the simple narration of that affair, they found

me such a superior genius, that I was chosen their chief by unanimous consent. I soon justified their choice, by an infinite number of knavish designs, which we put in practice, and of which I was, as it were, the informing soul. When we had occasion for an actress to carry on our projects, we made use of Camilla, who performed all her parts to admiration.

About that time, our brother Ambrose, being tempted to revisit his native country, set out for Gallicia, assuring us, that we might depend upon his return. He satisfied his desire, and on his way back again, going to Burgos, with an intencion of striking some stroke, an inn-keeper of his acquaintance introduced him to the service of Signior Gil Blas of Santillane, with whose affairs he did not fail to make him acquainted. Signior Gil Blas, (he added, addressing himself to me) you know how we rid you of your portmanteau, in our furnished lodgings at Valladolid; and I don't doubt that you suspected Ambrose of being the chief instrument of that theft. And you was in the right: for, at your arrival, he came and laid your situation before us, and we, the gentlemen undertakers; regulated ourselves accordingly. But you are ignorant of the consequences of that adventure, which I will, therefore, let you know. Ambrose and I carried off your portmanteau, and mounting your mules, took the road to Madrid, without incumbering ourselves with

Camilla, or the rest of our comrades, who, without doubt, were as much surprized as you, at our non-appearance next day.

On the second day, we changed our design, and, instead of going to Madrid, which I had not quitted without cause, we passed by Zeberos, and continued our route as far as Toledo. In this city, our first care was to dress ourselves like gentlemen; then giving ourselves out for two brothers of Galicia, who travelled out of curiosity, we soon became acquainted with persons of character. As I had been so much accustomed to act the man of quality, I was easily mistaken for such, and people being usually dazzled by expence, we imposed upon every body by the gallant treats we began to give to the ladies. Among the women whom I visited, there was one who touched my heart: I found her fairer than Camilla, and a good deal more young: I was desirous of knowing who she was, and learned that her name was Violante, and that her husband was a gentleman, who, cloyed already with her charms, pursued those of a courtesan, whom he loved. This piece of information was enough to determine me to establish Violante the sovereign lady of my affection.

It was not long before she perceived her conquest: I began to follow her every where, and commit a thousand impertinences, to persuade her that I wanted nothing more, than to console her for the infidelity of her spouse. The

The fair one made her reflections on the matter, which were such, that, at last, I had the pleasure of knowing her approbation of my sentiments. I received from her a billet, in answer to several which I had sent to her, by one of those old matrons who are so serviceable in Spain and Italy. The lady gave me to understand, that her husband supped every evening with his mistress, and did not come home before it was very late. That same night I went under the windows of Violante, and entered into a most tender conversation with her: after which we agreed, at parting, to enjoy the same opportunity every night, at the same hour, without prejudice to the other acts of gallantry which we should be permitted to exercise in the day.

Hitherto Don Balthazar, the husband of my princess, came off very cheaply; but I chose to love naturally, and repaired one evening under the lady's windows, with a design to tell her, that I could live no longer, if I did not enjoy a tête à tête with her, in a place more suitable to the excess of my love: an indulgence which I had not, as yet, been able to obtain. But just as I got to the place, I saw a man come into the street, who seemed to observe me: in effect, it was the husband, who returned from the courtesan earlier than usual, and who perceiving a cavalier near his house, instead of going in, walked to and fro in the street. I remained, for some time, unresolved; but, at last, determined to accost Don

Balthazar, whom I did not know, and of whom I was also utterly unknown. "Signior cavalier, (said I to him) pray leave the street free to me for one night: I will do as much for you another time." "Signior, (he replied) I was going to make the same request to you: I am in love with a girl, whom her brother guards like a dragon, and who lives not above twenty paces from hence; so that I wish there was nobody in the street." "There is one way (said I) of satisfying us both, without incommoding either: for (added I, shewing him his own house) the lady whom I serve, lodges there; and let us assist one another, if either of us should be attacked." "With all my heart, (he replied) I will go to my rendezvous, and we will back one another, should there be occasion." So saying, he left me; but it was in order to observe me the better, and this the darkness of the night permitted him to do with impunity.

As for my part, I approached, in security, the balcony of Violante, who soon appeared, and we began to converse together. I did not fail to insist upon my queen's granting me a private interview in some particular place. She resisted my importunities a little, to enhance the value of the favour which I demanded; then dropping a letter, which she took out of her pocket, "Hold, (said she) you will find in this billet, the promise of what you so earnestly desire." She afterwards withdrew, because the hour at which her husband usually

returned, was at hand, upon which I secured the billet, and advanced to the place where Don Balthazar said he was concerned : but he having very well perceived what I wanted with his wife, came to me, saying, " Well, Signior cavalier, are you satisfied with your good fortune?" " I have cause to be so, (I replied :) and what have you done ? has love favoured your addressee?" " Ah no ! (said he) the cursed brother of the beauty whom I love, is returned from a country-house, where I imagined he would stay till to-morrow ; and this mischance has baulked me of the pleasure with which I flattered myself."

Don Balthazar and I made mutual protestations of friendship ; and to tie the knots of it the faster, made an appointment to meet next day, in the great square. After we parted, he went home, but mentioned not a word of what he knew to Violante. Next day he repaired to the great square, where I arriving a moment after him, we saluted one another with demonstrations of friendship, as perfidious on one side, as sincere on the other. Then Don Balthazar made me the confident of a feigned intrigue with the lady whom he had mentioned the preceding night ; recounting a long story that he had invented, in order to engage me, in my turn, to tell him in what manner I had become acquainted with Violante. I did not fail to fall into the snare, and confess all with the utmost frankness : I

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even shewed the letter which I had received from her, and read the contents in these words :

“ I Shall dine to-morrow with Donna Inez :
“ I you know where she lives : 'tis in the
“ house of that faithful friend, that I intend
“ to give you a private interview ; for I can
“ no longer refuse that favour which you
“ seem to deserve.”

“ This (said Don Balthazar) is a billet which
promises you the accomplishment of your wish ;
I congratulate you beforehand, on the happiness that attends you.” He could not help being a little disconcerted while he said this ; but he easily concealed his trouble and confusion from me. I was so much engrossed by my hope, that I never thought of observing my confident, who was obliged, however, to leave me, that I might not at last perceive his agitation. He ran to apprise his brother-in-law of this adventure : but I am ignorant of what passed between them : all I know of the matter, is, that Don Balthazar came and knocked at the door while I was with Violante at the house of Donna Inez : and as soon as we learned that it was he, I escaped at a back-door before he came in. As soon as I was gone, the ladies, whom the unforeseen arrival of the husband had disconcerted, recollected themselves, and received him with such effronterie, that he suspected I was either concealed,

cealed, or had made my escape. I cannot tell what he said to Donna Inez and his wife, because it never came to my knowledge.

Mean while, without suspecting that I was Don Balthazar's dupe, I went away, cursing him, and returned to the great square, where I had appointed to meet Lamela. I did not find him, however; he had little affairs of his own to manage; and the rogue was more fortunate than I. While I waited for him, I saw my perfidious confident arrive, who came up to me with a gay air, and smiling, asked news of my interview with my nymph at the house of Donna Inez. "I don't know," said I, what dæmon, jealous of my pleasures, delights in thwarting them: but while I was alone with my lady, pressing her to make me happy, her husband, whom the devil confound! came and knocked at the door: so that being obliged to get off as fast as I could, I retired by a back-door, cursing to hell the troublesome cuckold who broke all my measures." "I am truly sorry for it," (cried Don Balthazar, who felt a secret joy in seeing my vexation) "what an impertinent husband must he be! I advise you to give him no quarter." "O! as for that," (I replied) "I will take your advice: and I can assure you that his honour shall make its exit this night: his wife, when I left her, bad me not be discouraged at so small a matter: but be sure to come under her window earlier than usual, for she was resolved to admit me into her house: and desired me, at all events,

to come attended with two or three friends, for fear of surprise." "What a prudent lady she is! (said he) I will, if you please, accompany you thither." "Ah, my dear friend! (cried I, in a transport of joy, while I threw my arms around his neck) I am infinitely obliged to you." "I will do more, (he resumed) I am acquainted with a young fellow who is another Cæsar; he shall be of the party, and then you may boldly confide in your escorte."

I did not know what acknowledgements to make to this new friend, so much was I charmed with his zeal. In short, I accepted the succour which he offered, and appointing to meet in the twilight under Violante's balcony, we parted for that time. He went to find his brother-in-law, who was the Cæsar in question, and I took a turn till the evening, with Lamela, who, (though he was surprised at the ardour with which Don Balthazar espoused my interest) distrusted him no more than I: we fell nodding into the snare, which, I own, was unpardonable in people of our experience. When I thought it was time to present myself before Violante's window, Ambrose and I appeared upon the spot, armed with good rapiers; and there we found the lady's husband, with another man, waiting for us, without flinching. Don Balthazar accosting me, and shewing his brother-in-law, said, "Signior, this is the cavalier whose bravery I extolled so much. Get into the house of

of your mistress, and let not any anxiety hinder you from enjoying the most perfect felicity."

After some mutual compliments, I knocked at my nymph's door, which being opened by a kind of duenna, I entered, and without taking notice of what passed behind me, advanced into a hall where Violante was. While I saluted the lady, the two traitors, who had followed me into the house, and shut the door so hastily after them, that Ambrose was left in the street, discovered themselves. You may easily imagine that we then came to blows. Both of them charged me at once; but I found them work enough, and employed them in such a manner, that perhaps they repented they had not chose a surer conveyance for their revenge. I ran the husband through the body, and his brother-in-law seeing him out of the question, got to the door, which the duenna and Violante had opened to make their escape, while we were engaged. I pursued him into the street, where I rejoined Lamela, who not being able to extract one word from the women in their flight, did not precisely know what to think of the noise he had heard. We returned to the tavern where we lodged, secured our most valuable effects, and mounting our mules, rode out of the city, without waiting for day.

Knowing very well that this affair might have bad consequences, and that a search would be made at Toledo, which we were in the

right to anticipate, we went to bed at Villarubia, at an inn, where some time after, a merchant of Toledo arrived, in his way to Segorba. As we supped in his company, he recounted the tragical adventure of Violante's husband, and was so far from suspecting us to be concerned, that we boldly asked of him all manner of questions about the affair. "Gentlemen, (said he) just as I set out this morning, I heard of the melancholy accident. Search was made every where for Violante, and I was told that the corregidor, who is related to Don Balthazar, has resolved to spare nothing in discovering the murderers. This is all I know of the matter."

Though I was not much alarmed at the search of the corregidor, I resolved to quit New Castile immediately: reflecting that when Violante should be found, she would confess all, and on her description of my person to the judge, people would be sent in pursuit of me. For this reason, the very next day, we avoided the high-way, through precaution: Lamela being luckily acquainted with three fourths of Spain, and particularly with the by-ways through which we could securely repair into Arragon. Instead of going straight to Cuenca, we kept among the mountains adjacent to that city; and through paths that were not unknown to my guide, arrived at a grotto which looked very much like an hermitage; and, indeed, it was the same to which you came last night, for an asylum.

While I was considering the country around, which presented to my view a most charming rural prospect; my companion said to me, "I passed by this place six years ago, at which time that grotto served as a retreat to an old hermit, who gave me a very charitable reception; entertaining me with a share of his provisions: I remember that he was a very holy man, and harangued me with a discourse that had almost detached me from the world: perhaps, he is still alive: I will go and see." So saying, the curious Ambrose alighted from his mule, and entered the hermitage, where having staid some minutes, he returned, calling to me, "Come hither, Don Raphael—come, and see a very affecting scene."

I alighted immediately, and tying our mules to a tree, followed Lamela into the grotto, where I perceived an old anchorite, pale and dying, stretched at his full length upon a truckle-bed. A white beard very bushy, covered his whole breast; and in his hands, clasped together, appeared a large, twisted rosary. At the noise we made in approaching him, he opened his eyes, which death had already begun to close, and after having looked at us for a moment, said, "Whosoever you are, my brethren, profit by the spectacle that now presents itself to your eyes: I have lived forty years in the world, and sixty in this solitude. Ah! how long, at this moment, seems the time which I have bestowed on my pleasures: and on the contrary, how short does

that appear which I have consecrated to penitence and devotion. Alas ! I am afraid that the austerities of brother John have not sufficiently expiated the sins of the licentiate Don Juan de Solis."

He had no sooner spoke these words than he expired, leaving us very much affected with his death. These sorts of objects always make some impression even on the greatest libertines. But we did not retain it long : we soon forgot what he had said to us, and began to take an inventory of every thing in the hermitage : an employment not very laborious ; all his furniture consisting in what you may have observed in the grotto. Brother John was not only ill provided with furniture, but also kept a very bad larder : for all the provision we found, was a few filberts, and some crusts of barley-bread, so hard as to be, in all appearance, proof against the gums of the holy man. I say, his gums ; because we observed that he had lost all his teeth. All that this solitary habitation contained, and all that we beheld, made us regard the good anchorite as a perfect saint. We were shocked, indeed, at one thing : we opened a paper folded in form of a letter, which he had laid upon the table, and in which he begged that the person who should read it, would carry his rosary and sandals to the bishop of Cuenca. We did not know with what intention this new father of the desert could desire to make such a present to his bishop. This seemed an

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outrage against humility, and the behaviour of a man who wanted to set up for canonization. And perhaps, there was nothing in it but pure simplicity: for I don't pretend to decide the matter.

While we discoursed together on this subject, a pleasant thought came into Lamela's head. "Let us stay (said he) in this hermitage, and disguise ourselves like anchorites, having first buried brother John. You shall pass for him, and I, under the name of brother Antony, will go a begging in the neighbouring towns and villages. Besides our being secure from the enquiries of the corregidor; (for I don't believe he will think of searching for us here) I have some good acquaintance at Cuenca, which we may cultivate." I approved of this extravagant proposal, not so much for Ambrose's reasons, as out of pure whim, or a desire of acting a part in a play. About thirty or forty paces from the grotto, we dug a grave, in which we modestly interred the old anchorite, after having stript him of his cloaths; that is, a simple robe tied about his middle with a leather girdle: we likewise cut off his beard, to make a false one for me; and, in short, after having performed his funerals, took possession of the hermitage.

We fared poorly the first day, being obliged to live on the provisions of the defunct; but next morning, before day, Lamela set out in order to sell the two mules at Toralva, and returned in the evening loaded with victuals,

and other things which he had purchased. He brought every thing that was necessary for our transformation ; he made for himself a russet gown, and a little red beard of horse-hair, which he fixed so artificially to his ears, that one would have sworn it was the natural produce of his chin. There is not a more dexterous young fellow in the world than he ; who likewise weaved the beard of brother John, which he applied to my face, and my brown woollen cap served to cover the artifice ; so that there was nothing wanting to our disguise. We found each other so pleasantly equipped, that we could not, without laughing, behold ourselves in this dress, which truly was not very suitable to our real characters. Together with brother John's robe, I wore his rosary and sandals, of which I made no scruple to deprive the bishop of Guenca.

We had been already three days in the hermitage, without seeing a soul appear ; but on the fourth two peasants entered the grotto, bringing bread, cheese, and onions, to the defunct, whom they still thought alive. As soon as I perceived them, I threw myself on my bed, and it was no difficult matter to deceive them : for, besides that there was not light enough to enable them to distinguish my features, I imitated as well as I could, the voice of brother John, whose last words I had heard ; and they had no suspicion of the cheat : they seemed only surprised to meet another hermit there : which when Lamela

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perceived he said with an hypocritical air, " My brethren, be not surpris'd to see me in this solitude ; I have quitted an hermitage I possessed in Arragon, to come hither and attend the venerable and discreet brother John, who in his extreme old age has occasion for a comrade who can provide for his necessities." The peasants gave infinite praise to the charity of Ambrose, and expressed great joy, in being able to boast of having two holy personages in their country.

Lamela with a large havresack, which he had not forgot to purchase, went a begging for the first time in the city of Cuenca, which is but a small league from the hermitage. With a devout appearance which he had received from nature, and the art of making advantage of it, which he possessed in a supreme degree, he did not fail to extort alms from charitable people, with whose liberalities he filled his havresack. " Mr. Ambrose, (said I to him at his return) I congratulate you upon your happy talent of melting the souls of christians. Egad ! one would think you had been a begging brother among the capuchins." " I have done something else (answered he) than fill my knapsack : you must know I have discovered a certain nymph called Barba, whom I formerly loved, and whom I have found strangely altered : she (like us) has turned devotee, and lives with two or three sisters of the same class, who edify the world in publick, and in private lead scandalous lives."

As she did not know me at first, "How! Madam Barba, (said I) is it possible that you do not recollect one of your old friends, your admirer Ambrose?" "By my faith! Signior de Lamela, (cried she) I should never have expected to see you again in the habit you wear! By what adventure are you become hermit?" I cannot tell you at present, (I replied) the detail is somewhat long; but I will come back to-morrow to gratify your curiosity, and bring along with me my companion brother John!" "Brother John! (said she, interrupting me) what the good anchorite who lives in the hermitage near this city? Sure you joke; they say, he is more than an hundred years old." "It is true (said I to her) that he was once of that age; but he has grown a great deal younger within these few days; and is at present no older than I." "Well, let him come along with you, (replied Barba) I see there is some mystery in the case."

We did not fail the next day as soon as it was dark, to go to the house of those bigots, who had prepared a sumptuous entertainment for our reception. We immediately took off our beards and hermits dress, and, without ceremony, told them who we were. On their side, for fear of being indebted to us for our frankness, they shewed what false devotees are capable of, when they banish grimace. We spent almost all the night at table, and did not retire to our grotto till the dawn. We

returned

returned thither again in a very short time; or rather, did the same thing (almost every day) during three months; in which time we spent two-thirds of our money with these nymphs: but one being suspicious of our characters, discovered the whole, and has informed justice against us, which this day intended to visit the hermitage, and secure our persons. Yesterday Ambrose, while he was begging at Cuenca, met one of our sisters, who gave him a note, saying, one of my friends wrote this letter to me, which I was going to send to you by an express: shew it to brother John, and take your measures accordingly. It was this billet, gentlemen, which Lamela delivered to me in your presence, and which has made us quit so suddenly our solitary habitation.

C H A P. II.

The council which Don Raphael held with his bearers, and the adventure which happened to them when they designed to quit the wood.

WHEN Don Raphael had ended his narration, which I thought a little tedious, Don Alphonso was so polite as to say, it had diverted him very much. Then Signior Ambrose opened, and addressing himself to his fellow-adventurer, "Don Raphael, (said he) consider that the sun is set; it will be proper, methinks, to deliberate upon what we are to do." "You are in the right, (replied his

his comrade) we must determine upon the place to which we go next." "It is my opinion, (resumed Lamela) that we should set forward without loss of time, reach Requena this night, and to-morrow enter the kingdom of Valencia, where we will give the rein to our industry, and, I foresee, perform some successful strokes. His confederate, who, on that subject, believed his presage infallible, assented to his opinion: as for Don Alphonso and me, leaving ourselves to the conduct of these honest people, we waited in silence the result of the conference.

It being therefore resolved that we should take the road to Requena, we began to prepare ourselves for the journey; we made another meal like that in the morning; and loading the horse with the bottle and the remains of our provisions, the approach of night lent us that darkness which we needed for our more secure travelling, and we pushed forward to get out of the wood: but we had not gone an hundred yards, when we discovered among the trees a light that made us very uneasy." What is the meaning of that, (said Don Raphael) perhaps the ferrets of justice having pursued us from Cuenca, understand that we are in this forest, and are come hither to search." "I don't believe that, (said Ambrose) these are rather travellers, who being surprised by the night, have come into this wood to wait for day. But (added he) I may be mistaken. I will go and reconnoitre while

while you stay here, and I will be back in a moment." So saying, he advanced towards the light, which was not far off, and approached it softly. Pushing gently by the leaves and boughs that were in his way, and peeping with all the attention which the thing seemed to deserve, he saw on the grass, round a candle that stuck burning in a lump of clay, four men sitting, who had just dispatched a pie, and emptied a pretty large leathern bottle, which they embraced in their turns. He likewise perceived, at some distance from them, a lady and gentleman tied to trees; and a little farther, a chaise with two mules richly caparisoned. He guessed at once, that the men were robbers; and their discourse, which he overheard, assured him that he was not mistaken in his conjecture. The four banditti expressed an equal desire of possessing the lady who had fallen into their hands, and talked of casting lots for her. . Lamela having fully informed himself of the matter, rejoined us, and made a faithful report of what he had seen and heard.

Upon which Alphonso said, "Gentlemen, that lady and cavalier whom the robbers have bound to trees, are perhaps persons of the first quality: and shall we suffer them to fall victims to the barbarity and brutality of thieves? Take my advice, let us attack these banditti, and put them all to death." "With all my heart, (said Don Raphael) I am as ready to do

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do a good as a bad action." Ambrose, on
his part, signified his willingness to lend a
hand to such a laudable enterprize, for which
(said he) I foresee we shall be well recom-
pensed. I dare likewise affirm, that on this
occasion I was not at all afraid of the danger;
and that no knight-errant ever shewed more
readiness to succour damsels in distress. But
not to conceal the truth, the danger was not
great: for Lamela having reported, that the
arms of the robbers were all in a heap at the
distance of ten or twelve paces from them, it
was no difficult matter for us to execute our
design. We tied our horse to a tree, and
approached, as gently as possible, the place
where they were talking with great warmth;
and making a noise that helped us to surprise
them, we made ourselves masters of their
arms, before we were discovered; then firing
a volley upon them, stretched them all breath-
less on the spot.

During this execution the light going out,
we remained in darkness; but for all that, did
not delay to untie the man and woman, who
were so much engrossed by their fear, that they
had not power to thank us for what we had
done in their behalf. 'Tis true indeed, they
did not as yet know whether to look upon us
as their deliverers, or as a new troop of ban-
ditti, who had not rescued them from the
others with any intention to use them better.
But we encouraged them, by protesting that
we



we would conduct them to an inn, which Ambrose affirmed was not more than half a league from thence ; and that they might there take all necessary precautions for their security, in going whither their affairs called them. After this assurance, with which they seemed very well satisfied, we re-placed them in their chaise, and brought them out of the wood, leading the mules by the bridle. Our anchorites afterwards examined the pockets of the vanquished, took care of Don Alphonso's horse, secured those that belonged to the thieves, which we found tied to trees near the field of battle ; and carrying them all off, followed brother Antony, who mounted one of the mules, in order to guide the chaise to the inn ; at which, however, we did not arrive in less time than two hours, although he had assured us that it was not far from the wood.

Every body in the house being a-bed, we knocked loudly at the door ; upon which the landlord and his wife got up in a hurry, and were not sorry to see their rest interrupted by the arrival of an equipage, which they thought would have spent more money than it did. The whole inn was lighted in a moment ; Don Alphonso and the illustrious son of Lucinda offered their hands to help the cavalier and lady out of the chaise, and even served them as ushers to the chamber whither the landlord conducted them. There a great many
compli-

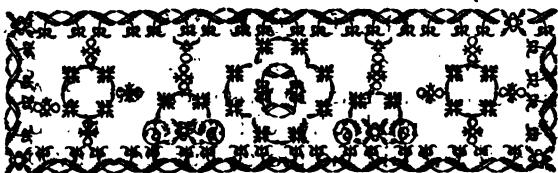
compliments passed ; and we were not a little astonished when we understood that it was the Count de Polan himself, and his daughter Seraphina, whom we had delivered. It is impossible to describe the surprize of that lady, as well as of Don Alphonso, when they recollected each other. The Count took no notice of it, so much was he otherwise engrossed, in recounting to us in what manner the robbers had attacked him ; and how they had seized his daughter and him, after having killed his postilion, page, and valet de chambre : he ended with telling us, that he had a deep sense of the obligation he lay under to us : and if we would come to him at Toledo, where he should be in a month, we should see whether or not he was ungrateful.

Nor did the daughter of this nobleman forget to thank us for her happy deliverance : and as Raphael and I imagined we should please Don Alphonso, by giving him an opportunity of talking a moment in private with that young widow, we gratified his desire, by amusing the Count de Polan. “ Fair Seraphina, (said Don Alphonso to the lady, in a low voice) I will no longer complain of the fate that compels me to live like a man banished from civil society, since I have been so happy as to contribute to the important service which you have received.” “ How ! (answered she sighing) is it you who have saved

saved my life and honour? Is it to you that my father and I are so much indebted? Ah! Don Alphonso! why did you kill my brother?" She said no more; but he easily perceived by these words, and the tone in which they were pronounced, that if he was violently in love with Seraphina, she was no less enamoured of him.

The End of the FIFTH BOOK.





THE
ADVENTURES
OF

GIL BLAS of Santillane.

BOOK VI.



CHAP. I.

The conduct of Gil Blas and his companions, after they quitted the Count de Polan. The important project which Ambrose formed, and the manner in which it was executed.

THE Count de Polan having spent
T one half of the night in thanking
and assuring us that we might de-
pend upon his gratitude, called the
landlord, in order to consult with him about
the means of getting in safety to Turis, whi-
ther he designed to go. We left that noble-
man to take his measures accordingly ; and
departing from the inn, followed the road
that Lamela was pleased to choose.

After

After having travelled two hours, day surprised us near Campelio; upon which, we immediately betook ourselves to the mountains, which are between that village and Requena, and there passed the day in reposing ourselves, and counting our finances, which were a good deal increased by the money of the robbers; for above three hundred pistoles were found in their pockets. As soon as it was dark we set forward again, and next morning entered the kingdom of Valencia. We retired to the first wood that presented itself to our view, and pushing a good way into it, arrived at a place through which a rivulet of crystalline water gently glided in its way to join the streams of the Guadalaviar*. The shade projected by the trees, and the grass which the place afforded in abundance to our horses, would have determined us to halt here, even if we had not been resolved upon it before. We alighted therefore, and prepared to pass the day very agreeably; but, when we went to breakfast, found very little provision left. We began to want bread, and our bottle was become a body without a soul. “Gentlemen, (said Amibrose) the most charming retreats are but disagreeable without Bacchus and Ceres; our provision must be renewed; I will for that purpose go to Xelva, an handsome town not

* Guadalaviar, a river of Spain, that taking its rise near the source of the Tagus, on the confines of Arragon and New Castile, traverses the first of these kingdoms, enters Valencia, waters the capital, and discharges itself into the gulph of that name.

above two leagues from hence ; so that the journey will soon be finished." So saying, he fixed the bottle and havresack on one of the horses, and mounting atop of them, went out of the wood with a dispatch that promised a speedy return.

He did not come back, however, so soon as we expected ; more than half of the day elapsed, and night was ready to cover the trees with her sooty wings, when we beheld our purveyor, whose stay had begun to give us some uneasiness. He exceeded our expectation by the quantity of things with which he returned loaded ; he brought not only the leathern bottle filled with excellent wine, and the knapsack crammed with bread and all sorts of roasted venison, but also a great bundle of cloth, which we observed with a good deal of attention. He perceived our admiration, and said with a smile, " I defy Don Raphael, and all the world together, to guess why I have purchased these things." Saying these words, he loosed the bundle, to shew the particulars of what he had observed in the grove. He displayed a cloak, and very long black robe ; two doublets with their hose ; one of those inkhorns which are composed of two pieces tied together by a string, the horn of which is separated from the pen-case ; a quire of fine white paper, and a padlock with a large seal and green wax ; and when he had exhibited his whole purchase, Don Raphael said to him

in

In a jocular way, "Egad, Mr. Ambrose, it must be confessed you have made a fine bargain. What use, if you please, do you intend to make of it?" "An admirable one, (replied Lamela;) all these things have cost me but ten doubloons; and I am persuaded that they will bring us in more than five hundred; you may depend upon it, I am none of those who incumber themselves with useless effects; and to convince you that I did not buy all this like a fool, I will communicate the project I have formed.

"Having furnished myself with bread, (added he) I went into a cook's shop; where I ordered six partridges, as many pullets and young rabbits, to be put to the fire; and while they were doing, a man came into the shop in a rage, and loudly complaining of the behaviour of a merchant in town, said to the cook, "By St. Jago! Samuel Simon is the most ridiculous merchant in Silva; he has affronted me in open shop; the covetous wretch would not give me credit for six ells of cloth, though he knows very well that I am a responsible tradesman, and that he can lose nothing by me. Is not he a strange animal? He sells willingly on credit to people of quality, and had rather venture with them, than oblige an honest citizen without any risk. Was there ever such madness? Damned Jew! would he were taken in! My wish will be one day ac-

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completed. There are merchants enough of
my opinion."

Hearing the tradesman speak in this manner, and say a great many other things of the same nature, I had a certain forewarning that I should cheat this Samuel Simon. "Friend, (said I to the man who complained) what is the character of this person whom you mentioned?" "A very bad one, (answered he hastily) I assure you he is a rank usurer, though he affects the manners of a benevolent man. He was a Jew, and turned Catholic; but in his heart, he is still as much a Jew as ever Pilate was: for, they say, he abjured for interest."

I lent an attentive ear to all the discourse of the tradesman; and did not fail, when I came out of the cook's shop, to inquire for Samuel Simon's house. A person shewed it to me: I surveyed his shop, examined every thing; and my imagination, ready at a call, sketched out a stratagem which I digested, and which appeared worthy of the valet of Signior Gil-Blas. I went to a broker's, where I bought these cloaths; one suit for acting an inquisitor, another to represent a scrivener, and the third for playing the part of an alguazil.

"Ah, my dear Ambrose! (cried Don Raphael, interrupting him, in a transport of joy) what a wonderful idea! what a glorious plan! I am jealous of the invention, and would willingly give up the greatest strokes of my life,
to

to be thought the author of such a happy scheme! Yes, Lamela, (added he) I see all the richness of thy design, the execution of which ought to give thee no uneasiness. Thou hast occasion for two good actors to second thee, and they are already found. Thou, who hast the air of a devotee, wilt act the inquisitor very well; I will represent the secretary; and Signior Gil Blas (if he pleases) shall play the part of an alguazil; thus (continued he) are the cues distributed: to-morrow we will act the piece, and I'll answer for its success, unless some of those unlucky accidents happen, which confound the best-concerted designs."

I conceived as yet but very confusedly the project which Don Raphael liked so much; but the whole was explained to me at supper, and the trick seemed ingenious. After having dispatched part of our venison, and made our leathern bottle undergo a copious evacuation, we stretched ourselves upon the grass, and were asleep in a very short time. "Get up, get up, (cried Signior Ambrose, at day-break) people who have great enterprizes to execute, ought not to be lazy." "Dewce take you, Mr. Inquisitor, (said Don Raphael, waking) how alert you are! that bodes no good to Mr. Simon." "I grant it, (replied Lamela) and will moreover tell you, I dreamed this night, that I plucked the hairs from his beard: Is not that a villainous dream for him,"

him, Mr. Secretary? These jokes were followed by a thousand more, which put us all in good humour: we made a chearful breakfast, and then prepared for acting our several parts. Ambrose put on the long gown and cloak, which gave him all the air of a commissary of the holy office: Don Raphael and I dressed ourselves likewise, so as to bear a pretty good resemblance to a secretary and alguazil. We employed a good deal of time in disguising ourselves; and it was past two o'clock in the afternoon, when we quitted the wood, and set out for Xelva. 'Tis true, indeed, we were in no hurry, as our comedy would not begin before the twilight: we therefore went at a very slow pace, and stopping at the city-gate, waited there till night.

As soon as it was dark, we left our horses in this place to the care of Don Alphonso, who was very glad that he had no other part to perform. Don Raphael, Ambrose, and I, went immediately into a publican's in the neighbourhood; and Mr. Inquisitor going foremost, said to the landlord with great gravity, "Master, I want to talk with you in private." The landlord carried us into a parlour, where Lamela finding him alone with us, said, "I am commissary of the holy office, come hither upon a very important affair." At these words the publican grew pale, and replied with a faltering voice, that he hoped he had given no cause of complaint to the holy inquisition: "There-

“ Therefore (replied Ambrose) it has no intention to give you any trouble : God forbid that, too prompt to punish, it should confound innocence with guilt ; it is severe, but always just : in a word, one must deserve its chastisements before he feels them. It was not you who brought me to Xelva, but a certain merchant called Samuel Simon, of whom we have received a very bad report : it is said that he is still a Jew, and embraced christianity thro’ motives purely carnal. I order you therefore, in the name of the holy office, to tell me what you know of that man. Beware of excusing him, on account of his being your neighbour, and perhaps your friend ; for I declare, if I perceive in your evidence the least reserve, you yourself are a lost man. Come, secretary, (added he, turning to Raphael) do your duty.”

Mr. Secretary, who already had his paper and inkhorn in his hand, sat down at a table, and prepared, with the most serious air in the world, to write the deposition of the landlord, who, on his part, protested that he would not betray the truth. “ Well then, (said the commissary inquisitor to him) let us begin : answer only to my questions ; I ask no more.” “ Do you see Samuel Simon frequent the church ?” “ ’Tis what I have not observed, (said the publican) I don’t remember to have seen him at church.” “ Good ! (cried the inquisitor.) Write, that he is never

seen at church." "I don't say so, Mr. Commissary, (replied the landlord) I only say, that I never saw him there : he may be in the same church with me, though I don't perceive him."

"Friend, (said Lamela) you forget that you must not, in your examination, excuse Samuel Simon : I have told you the consequences of it. You must mention only those things that are against him, and not one word in his favour." "If that be the case, Signior Licentiate, (resumed the landlord) you can't reap much from my deposition ; I am not acquainted with the merchant in question ; therefore can say neither good nor ill of him : but if you want to know how he lives in his own family, I will go and call Gaspard his 'prentice, whom you may interrogate : he comes here sometimes, to make merry with his friends ; and such a tongue ! he will discover the whole life and conversation of his master, and I warrant it, find employment enough for your secretary."

"I like your frankness, (said Ambrose) and you shew your zeal for the holy office, by informing me of a man acquainted with the morals of Simon. I will report you to the inquisition. Make haste, then, (continued he) and bring hither that same Gaspard, whom you mention. But do things discreetly, that his master may have no suspicion of what passes." The publican acquitted himself of his commission with great secrecy and diligence,

gence, and brought along with him the merchant's 'prentice, who was just such a very talkative young fellow as we wanted. "Welcome, child, (said Lamela to him) you see, in me, an inquisitor, nominated by the holy office to take informations against Samuel Simon, who is accused of Judaism. You live with him, and, of consequence, are witnesses to the greatest part of his behaviour. I believe it is unnecessary to advertise you of the obligation you are under to declare all that you know of him, when I order you to do so, in the name of the holy inquisition." "Signior Licentiate, (replied the young man) I am very ready to satisfy you on that head, without being commanded in the name of the holy office. If my master was to take me for his text, I am persuaded that he would not spare me; I will therefore deal as plainly with him, and tell you, in the first place, that he is a close hunk, whose true sentiments it is impossible to discover; one who affects all the exteriors of a holy man, but has not one scruple of virtue at bottom. He goes every evening to the house of a little Abigail." "I am glad to hear that, (said Ambrose, interrupting him) and I see, by what you say, that he is a man of bad morals: but, answer precisely to the questions I am going to ask. I am particularly enjoined to know what are his sentiments with respect to religion. Tell me, do you eat pork in your house?" "I

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don't

don't think (replied Gaspard) that we have eat of it twice, during the whole year that I have lived with him." "Very well (resumed master inquisitor :) write, secretery, that pork is never eaten in the house of Samuel Simon. But, to make amends for that, (continued he) you, doubtless, eat lamb sometimes." "Yes, sometimes, (replied the 'prentice) we had some, for example, last Easter." "A lucky epocha ! (cried the commissary :) write, secretery, that Simon keeps the pass-over. This goes on excellently well, and, methinks, we have received good intelligence.

"Besides, you must tell me, friend, (added Lamela) if you have never seen your master caress little children." "A thousand times, (replied Gaspard) when he sees little boys pass by his shop, if they are at all handsome, he stops and fondles them." "Write, master secretery, (said the inquisitor, interrupting him) that Samuel Simon is violently suspected of decoying Christian children into his house, in order to cut their throats. A fine proselyte indeed ! Oh, ho ! Mr. Simon, you shall have to do with the holy office, take my word for it : you must not imagine that you will be allowed to make your barbarous sacrifices with impunity. Courage ! zealous Gaspard, (said he to the 'prentice) declare all that you know of the matter ; and give us to understand, tht this false catholic is more attached than ever to the Jewish customs and cere-

ceremonies. Does not he spend one day of the week in total inaction?" "No, (answered Gaspard) I have not observed that: I only perceive that on some days he shuts himself up in his closet, where he remains a long time." "Ah! ha! (cried the commissary) he keeps the sabbath, as sure as I am an inquisitor. Mark, secretary, mark that he religiously observes the fast of the sabbath. Ah! the abominable wretch! I have only one thing more to ask. Does not he speak also of Jerusalem?" "Very often, (replied the young man) he relates to us the history of the Jews, and in what manner the temple of Jerusalem was destroyed." "Right! (said Ambrose) master secretary, let not this piece of intelligence escape you: write, in large characters, that Samuel Simon breathes nothing but the restoration of the temple; and that he meditates night and day the re-establishment of his nation. I do not want to know any more; therefore, it is needless to ask any other questions: what the trusty Gaspard has deposed, is enough to bring a whole synagogue to the stake."

Master commissary of the holy office having interrogated the 'prentice in this manner, told him he might retire; but ordered him, in the name of the holy inquisition, to conceal from his master every tittle of what had passed. Gaspard, having promised to obey, took his leave; and we did not tarry long af-

ter he went out, but leaving the public house, as gravely as we had entered, went and knocked at the door of Samuel Simon, who opened it with his own hand; and if he was astonished to see three such figures as we were, he was much more so, when Lamela, being spokesman, said to him, with an imperious tone, "Mr. Samuel, I command you, in the name of the holy inquisition, of which I have the honour to be commissary, to deliver into my hand, this instant, the key of your closet: I want to see if I cannot find something to justify the informations which have been presented to us against you."

The merchant, confounded at these words, reeled two steps backward, as if he had received a blow on the stomach. Far from suspecting us of any trick, he believed implicitly, that some secret enemy wanted to subject him to the suspicion of the holy office; perhaps too, knowing himself to be no good catholic, he had cause to be afraid of an information. Be that as it will, I never saw a man more disconcerted: he obeyed without resistance, and opened his closet, with all the respect that a man could shew, who is in terror of the inquisition. "At least, (said Ambrose, while he went in) at least you receive the orders of the holy office without contumacy. But (added he) retire into another room, and leave me at liberty to perform my function." Samuel was as obedient to this order as to the first:

first : he remained in his shop, while we three entered his closet, and began to search for his cash, which we easily found ; for it was in an open coffer, and in much greater quantity than we could carry off, consisting of a great number of bags piled upon one another ; but the whole in silver. We should have liked gold better ; but things being as they were, we were fain to accommodate ourselves to necessity, and fill our pockets with ducats. We stuffed our breeches with them, and crammed them into every other part which we judged proper to conceal them. In short, we were heavy laden, though our cargo did not appear ; and this was owing to the address of Ambrose and Don Raphael, who, by their behaviour on this occasion, let me see that there is nothing like one's being master of his trade.

After having done our business so successfully, we came out of the closet, and, for a reason that the reader will easily guess, master Inquisitor took out his padlock, and fixed it to the door with his own hand, then applying the seal, said to Simon, " Master Samuel, I forbid you, in the name of the holy inquisition, to touch this padlock, as well as the seal, which you are bound to respect, since it is the true seal of the holy office. I will return at the same hour to-morrow, in order to take it off, and bring further orders for you." So saying, he made him open the street-door, through

through which we joyfully passed, one after another. When we had gone about fifty yards, we began to walk with such speed and nimbleness, that we scarce touched the ground, notwithstanding the burdens which we carried. We soon got out of town, and remounting our horses, pushed towards Segorba, giving thanks to the god Mercury for such an happy event.

C H A P. II.

The resolution which Don Alphonso and Gil Blas formed after this adventure.

WE travelled all night, according to our laudable custom, and found ourselves, at break of day, near a little village two leagues from Segorba. As we were all fatigued, we willingly quitted the highway, to get among some willows, which we perceived at the bottom of a little hill, ten or twelve hundred paces from the village, in which we did not think proper to stop. We found that the willows yielded an agreeable shade, being watered by a small rivulet; and the place suiting our taste, we resolved to spend the day in it. Alighting, therefore, we unbridled our horses to let them feed, and lay down upon the grass, where we took a little repose. We then emptied our knapsack and leathern bottle, and having made a plentiful breakfast, counted all the money which we had taken from

Samuel

Samuel Simon, and which amounted to three thousand ducats ; so that, with this sum, and what we had before, we might have boasted of having a pretty good stock.

As it was necessary for some of us to go and buy provision, Ambrose and Don Raphael, having quitted their dress of inquisitor and secretary, said that they would take that charge upon themselves ; that the adventure at Xelva had only wetted their appetite ; that they longed to be at Segorba, to see if some occasion would not offer, of striking a new stroke. “ You have nothing to do, (added the son of Lucinda) but wait for us under these willows ; we will not tarry, but rejoin you in a very short time.” “ Signior Don Raphael, (cried I, laughing) bid us rather wait for you till doomday ; if you leave us now, I believe we need not expect to see you sooner.” “ We are affronted by your suspicion, (replied Signior Ambrose) but we deserve it at your hands : your distrust is excusable, after what we did at Valladolid ; and we cannot blame you for thinking that we will make no more scruple of forsaking you, than of abandoning our comrades in that city : but, however, you are mistaken ; the confederates, from whose company we withdrew, were persons of very bad characters, and their society began to grow insupportable. We must do justice to people of our profession, by affirming that there are no associates in
civil

civil life less divided by interest than they : but when there is not a conformity of inclinations among them, their good understanding may be broke, as well as that of the rest of mankind. Wherefore, Signior Gil Blas, (added Lamela) we beg that you and Don Alphonso will have a little more confidence in us ; and let not the desire of Don Raphael and me to go to Segorba, give you the least uneasiness."

" It is an easy matter (said the son of Lucinda) to rid them of all cause of anxiety : let them remain masters of the cash, and then they will have, in their own hands, good security for our return. You see, Signior Gil Blas, (added he) that we come to the point at once. You shall have pledges in your hands, and I can assure you, that Ambrose and I will set out without the least apprehension of your giving us the slip. After such a certain mark of our fidelity, won't you trust entirely to our promise ?" " Yes, gentlemen, (said I) and you may now do what you please." They departed immediately with the leathern bottle and knapsack, leaving me under the willows with Don Alphonso, who, after they were gone, said to me, " Signior Gil Blas, I must disclose my sentiments to you. I upbraid myself with having had the complaisance to come so far with two sharpers : you cannot imagine how often I have repented of this my conduct. Yesterday, while I took care of the
horses,

horses, I made a thousand mortifying reflections : I considered, that it ill became a young man, who has principles of honour, to live with such wicked wretches as Don Raphael and Lamela ; that if unluckily, one day, which may not be far off, a trick should miscarry, by which we shall fall into the hands of justice, I shall be shamefully punished with them as a thief, and undergo the most infamous chastisement. These images incessantly occur to my fancy ; and I own I have resolved, that I may no longer be an accomplice of their misdemeanors, to separate from them for ever. I don't believe, (continued he) that you will disapprove of my design." " No, I'll assure you, (answered I) though you have seen me act the part of an alguazil, in the comedy of Samuel Simon, don't imagine that these sorts of pieces are to my taste. I take heaven to witness, that while I played such a fine part, I said within myself, In faith, Mr. Gil Blas, if justice should now come and seize you by the collar, you would richly deserve the salary which she would bestow. I feel myself, therefore, no more disposed than you, Signior Don Alphonso, to remain longer in such good company : and if you will give me leave, I will accompany you. When the gentlemen return, we will demand our share of the finances, and to-morrow morning, or this very night, bid them an eternal adieu."

The

The beautiful Seraphina's lover approved of my proposal : " Let us (said he) get into Valencia, and embark for Italy, where we may engage in the Venetian service. Is it not better to carry arms than lead this base guilty life ? we shall even be in a condition to make a pretty good figure with the money which we have : not that I can use such ill-gotten wealth without remorse ; but, besides that I am compelled by necessity, if ever I make the least fortune in war, I swear that I will indemnify Samuel Simon." I assured Don Alphonso, that I entertained the same sentiments, and, in short, we resolved to leave our comrades, next morning before day. We had not the least temptation to profit by their absence, that is, to decamp immediately with the cash : the confidence they had shewn, in leaving us masters of the money, did not permit us to harbour such a thought.

Ambrose and Don Raphael returned from Segorba in the evening ; and the first thing they told us was, that their journey had been prosperous ; that they had laid the foundation of a stratagem, which, in all likelihood, would be more advantageous than the last. Accordingly, the son of Lucinda was going to inform us of the particulars, when Don Alphonso declared his resolution to leave them ; and let them know that I had the same intention. They used all their endeavours, in vain, to engage us to accompany them in
their

their expeditions; for we took leave of them next day, after having made an equal partition of the money, and proceeded on our way to Valencia.

C H A P. III.

After what disagreeable incident Don Alphonso found his wishes fulfilled; and by what adventure Gil Blas, of a sudden, saw himself in a happy situation.

WE pushed forward chearfully, as far as Bunol, where unfortunately being obliged to halt, Don Alphonso fell sick of a high fever, with violent paroxysms, which made me afraid of his life. Luckily there was no physician in the place, and I was quit for my fear: he was out of danger at the end of three days, and my care helped to re-establish his health. He shewed himself very sensible of what I had done for him; and as we felt a reciprocal kindness for one another, we swore an eternal friendship.

We betook ourselves again to the road, still resolved, when we should arrive at Valencia, to take the first opportunity of a passage into Italy. But heaven disposed of us otherwise. Seeing a number of peasants, of both sexes, dancing in a circle, and making merry, before the gate of a fine castle, we approached to behold their mirth; and Don Alphonso expected nothing less than the surprize with

which he was seized, all of a sudden. He perceived the Baron de Steinbach, who no sooner knew him again, than he ran to him with open arms, saying, in a transport of joy, "Ah, Don Alphonso! is it you! what an agreeable rencounter is this! while enquiry is made after you, all over the kingdom, chance presents to you my view."

My companion alighting immediately, ran and embraced the Baron, whose joy seemed immoderate. "Come, my son, (said the good old man to him) you will now know who you are, and enjoy the most perfect happiness." So saying, he carried him into the castle, which I likewise entered along with them; for while they embraced one another, I had alighted and tied our horses to a tree. The master of the castle was the first person whom we met. He was a man of about fifty years of age, and a very engaging aspect: "Signiør, (said the Baron de Steinbach, presenting Don Alphonso to him) behold your son." "At these words, Don Cæsar de Leyva (so was the master of the castle called) threw his arms about Don Alphonso's neck, and weeping with joy, "My dear son, (said he) you see in me the author of your being: if I have let you remain so long in ignorance of your birth, believe me, I did in that a cruel violence to myself: I have a thousand times sighed with sorrow; but I could not do otherwise. I married your mother through inclination, tho' she was
of

of a birth inferior to mine; and lived under the authority of a harsh father, who reduced me to the necessity of keeping secret a marriage contracted without his consent. The Baron de Steinbach alone was in my confidence, and it was in concert with me that he brought you up. In short, my father is no more, and I am now at liberty to declare you my sole heir. This is not all, (added he) you shall be married to a young lady, whose nobility equals mine." "Signior, (cried Don Alphonso, interrupting him) don't make me pay too dear for the happiness which you bestow. Cannot I know that I have the honour of being your son, without learning, at the same time, that you want to make me unhappy? Ah, sir! be not more cruel than your own father, who, though he did not approve of your passion, was not so severe as to force you to marry." "Son, (replied Don Cæsar) I don't intend to tyrannize over your affections: but be so complaisant as to see the lady whom I destine for your bed; that is all I exact of your obedience. Though she is a charming creature, and a very advantageous match for you, I promise, not to constrain you to make her your wife. She is now in the castle; follow me, and you will own that there never was a more amiable object." So saying, he conducted Don Alphonso into an apartment, whither I attended them, with the Baron de Steinbach.

There

There was the Count de Polan, with his two daughters, Seraphina and Julia, and Don Ferdinand, his son-in-law, who was nephew to Don Cæsar : there were other ladies and gentlemen present also. Don Ferdinand (as was already observed) had carried off Julia ; and it was on occasion of the marriage of these two lovers, that the peasants of the neighbourhood were assembled to make merry. As soon as Don Alphonso appeared, and his father had presented him to the company, the Count de Polan got up, and running to embrace him, said, “ Welcome, my deliverer ! Don Alphonso, (added he) observe the power that virtue has on generous minds : if you killed my son, you have also saved my life. I sacrifice my resentment to you, and give you that Seraphina, whose honour you have preserved. In this manner I acquit myself of my obligation.” The son of Don Cæsar did not fail to testify to the Count de Polan, how much he was affected with his generosity ; and I don’t know whether he felt more joy in discovering his birth, or in learning that he was to be Seraphina’s husband. In effect, that marriage was celebrated in a few days after, to the infinite satisfaction of the parties concerned.

As I was also one of the Count’s deliverers, that nobleman, who knew me again, assured me, he would take upon himself the care of making my fortune ; but I thanked him for
his

his generosity, and would not leave Don Alphonso, who made me steward of his house, and honoured me with his confidence. Scarce was he married, when the trick which had been played upon Samuel Simon, lying on his conscience, he sent me to that merchant, with all the money which had been stolen from him. I went accordingly to make restitution, and began the business of a steward, by doing that which ought to be the end of it.

The End of the SECOND VOLUME.



